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Fiftieth Session

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Sunday, 22 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 29 *(continued)*

Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

The President: This afternoon, we hold the second meeting of the Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mário Soares, President of the Portuguese Republic.

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mário Soares, President of the Portuguese Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Mário Soares, President of the Portuguese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Soares *(spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation)*: It is an honour to take part in this historic session presided over by my illustrious compatriot, Diogo Freitas do Amaral. I wish to reiterate to him, here, the high regard and esteem in which I hold him.

I wish also to extend warm greetings to Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, whose thinking and efforts on behalf of the restructuring of the United Nations have earned my full support. This session constitutes a unique opportunity to assess the work of the United Nations. But we should also take advantage of this occasion to debate the future. This is a good opportunity to consolidate that which should be consolidated and to reform that which should be reformed.

Tribute must be paid to the United Nations for its steadfast efforts in the furtherance of peace, dialogue and development. The difficulties and frustrations encountered have been, for the most part, the responsibility of the Member States. At other times, they stem from a serious lack of finances. Such difficulties can be overcome only if States — both large and small — recognize that the world has changed, that the will of peoples and international public opinion count today. The strength of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations represents a powerful stimulus in favour of democracy, human rights and peace. Outstanding examples of this are the decolonization movement, in which a democratic Portugal participated actively, and, subsequently, the struggle to abolish apartheid.

For that reason, allow me to refer to the outrageous situation that continues to prevail in the Non-Self-Governing Territory of East Timor, which still awaits the conclusion of a decolonization process brutally interrupted by 20 years of occupation by Indonesia.

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In a rapidly changing world, in the face of unstoppable processes of globalization, the United Nations must do everything it can to ensure that changes occur without serious disruptions and in the service of all mankind, as called for in the recent appeal of the Copenhagen Conference.

We must, however, have the courage to recognize that the gap that separates the poor countries from the wealthy is growing ever wider and is becoming truly explosive.

In the communications society in which we live, it has become clear that all the world's peoples aspire to take part in solving the overall problems of mankind. Everything affects everyone. And such participation today also means the sharing of scientific knowledge, technology and information. These ongoing changes call for a global strategy which obviously requires the restructuring of the United Nations system.

Will we be capable of ensuring peace, our most precious asset? Of imposing the rule of law? Of putting an end to poverty, underdevelopment, fanaticism and ignorance?

The key concept for a new approach is prevention. The current system's inability to respond, in physical, material and financial terms, in a timely and effective manner to the need for intervention in conflicts has made it especially clear in the last few years that the best strategy and, in the final analysis, oddly enough, the one that entails the lesser financial burden is the prevention of crises and conflicts. This calls to mind the following phrase used by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

> "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

It is therefore essential to take action everywhere to promote dialogue and tolerance, instituting, as Mr. Federico Mayor has said, a true "culture of peace". Peace can be built only by struggling against violence in all its forms — including in the mass media, by creating conditions of greater equality among human beings, and by educating people in the values of humanism, democracy and solidarity.

One area in which the potential of the United Nations seems to me to be particularly encouraging is that of the world's oceans. Within the United Nations, it has been possible to establish a new international legal order for the oceans, based on the principles of peaceful utilization, cooperation, and development of the capabilities of every nation.

It is my intention to foster the process of international study of the opportunities and challenges afforded by ocean exploration, with a view to the imperative need to preserve and protect them. This plan is naturally of special significance to a maritime nation like Portugal and is consistent with the recent United Nations initiative to proclaim 1998 as the "International Year of the Oceans". That is also the year in which an international exhibition is to be held in Lisbon devoted to the theme "The Oceans, a Heritage for the Future".

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is an opportunity to think about what the future should be. We must do so optimistically, assuming our responsibilities towards future generations and passing this on to our youth. This optimism must be built on a realistic basis, in a spirit of solidarity. It is incumbent on each and every one of us, as human beings, at this dawn of a new millennium, to commit ourselves, boldly and creatively, to building a different future for humanity, a future free of wars, with a sense of sharing in a common venture and a common destiny, in this home, which is common to us all and which we must preserve — the planet Earth.

The President thanked the President of the Portuguese Republic for his statement; Mr. Soares, President of the Portuguese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Liamine Zeroual, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Liamine Zeroual, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

His Excellency Mr. Liamine Zeroual, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Zeroual (Algeria) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: In the history of mankind and mankind's progress towards the attainment of its ideals, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations represents an ideal

moment for us to engage in collective introspection and to prepare conditions favourable to a new point of departure for our Organization — collective introspection which should enable us to take stock of the state of affairs in our common planetary home and a new point of departure which we should make possible through a healthy rehabilitation of the values and ideals upon which the United Nations was founded.

Through this commemoration, it is those values and ideals which are favourable to the aspirations of all peoples after peace, security and shared prosperity that we are celebrating and we do so with all the more faith even if the hopes embodied in the United Nations have been frustrated and the Organization's work remains incomplete.

The fact that the United Nations has seen its membership approach universality in its 50 years of existence bears witness to the existence of a fortunate convergence between the trail that was blazed by the Charter and the course that has been followed by many of our peoples. The fact that the United Nations was able to foster the vast liberation movement that delivered peoples from the yoke of colonial domination, holds its rightful place among the causes of satisfaction that give today's event its full meaning.

Similarly, the United Nations has woven the fabric of cooperation amongst States — a cooperation which has made it possible to spread the benefits of the mastery that mankind has achieved over nature in various spheres of life.

In this regard, my country welcomes the important and effective action by numerous organs of the United Nations system which have rendered invaluable services, especially to the developing world, thus fuelling our hopes for ever-greater achievements that would be more widely shared.

At the same time, in the course of these past 50 years, the United Nations has been the mirror that faithfully reflected the contradictions, trials and conflicts which have filled so many pages in mankind's tormented history. Instead of becoming the centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of common ends as envisaged in the Charter, the United Nations became a closed arena where power politics were deployed in the pursuit of exclusive and narrow interests in a climate of confrontation.

However, let us be fair to our Organization and let us recognize that the weaknesses and shortcomings of the work of the United Nations could not be viewed in isolation from the limits that Member States have imposed upon their cooperation, in particular with respect to international peace, security and development.

The end of the cold war has released vast energies and has lowered the barriers that prevented the United Nations from realizing its full potential. Accordingly, the fiftieth anniversary, if the Organization is to prove equal to our legitimate aspirations and ambitions, should afford us an ideal opportunity to make a collective breakthrough towards the realization of the promise of a more equitable and peaceful international society.

The United Nations has miraculously survived the perils that burdened the past 50 years of its life, perils that impeded the discharge of its mission, weakened its effectiveness and, consequently, generated among our peoples, feelings of frustration that have been, at times, quite deep. Nevertheless the United Nations continued and will continue to be the crucible of a great many expectations and hopes.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, the peoples of the United Nations, whose national systems are increasingly converging towards pluralistic democracy, the protection of all human rights and the promotion of a market economy, are entitled to redouble their expectations with regard to the responsibilities the Organization has to shoulder and what major objectives it should achieve.

What is needed here is that the elimination of colonialism should be fully completed. What is needed also is that conflict situations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Middle East, the Western Sahara and in all other regions should be addressed and resolved in conformity with justice and law. Also expected of the United Nations is to address the need to combat the scourge of terrorism which is a new form of destabilization of States and an infringement of international security. That scourge should be combated resolutely through a renewed international cooperation.

There is also the process of nuclear disarmament which needs to be expanded and stepped up. The environment needs to be protected in the face of new dangers that threaten man and his world.

Finally, there is the need to consolidate the role of the United Nations through the institution of reforms that would make it the truly legitimate representative and efficient instrument which the convergence and cohesion of the political will of Member States will enable to face up to the major challenges of our day.

These are the focal points of the work that lies before mankind on this solemn occasion of celebrating the passage of 50 years since the United Nations was founded.

Algeria, which is resolved to shoulder all its regional and international responsibilities, will always be an active and committed partner in all sincere efforts aimed at guaranteeing future generations the benefit of all the values and ideals of the United Nations, values and ideals that will lead to an advanced, prosperous, just, harmonious and peaceful international society.

The President: I thank the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Liamine Zeroual, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of the Republic of Kazakstan

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of the Republic of Kazakstan.

His Excellency Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of the Republic of Kazakstan, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Nazarbaev (*interpretation from Russian*): It is a great honour for me to represent the Republic of Kazakstan at this historic meeting. Allow me to congratulate all those present on this truly remarkable occasion, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

We are living in a dynamically changing world. Today's international structures do not always effectively respond to new realities. This is only natural.

The World War that began in 1914 brought about the League of Nations. The Second World War gave birth to the United Nations. The collapse of the bipolar world and the new geopolitical and economic realities demand the renewal of international bodies. History itself teaches us this.

Could anyone involved in the elaboration of the Versailles security system have foreseen that in 20 years' time there would be the biggest bloodletting in the history of humanity? The result was the collapse of the first structure for world cooperation.

Who at the time of the creation of the United Nations could have foreseen a prolonged cold war between the two world systems, resulting in an unexpected collapse of one of them? Could anyone have imagined 10 years ago that one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement and a prosperous State of Europe — I am referring to Yugoslavia — would soon be torn apart and would sink in the blood of innocent people?

Today, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we stand at the threshold of a new era in the development of global structures.

No international structure on the eve of twenty-first century will be capable of effectively resolving the issues of global security and social and political development without taking into consideration the new global balances, which are already being reflected today in the emergence of new centres of power in Western Europe, South-East Asia and North America. I stated Kazakstan's view on this issue at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva last June.

Today we should be grateful to the United Nations for its effective endeavours, which have helped us all to avert potential global disasters in the second half of the twentieth century. This is an undoubted accomplishment of the United Nations and its principal bodies and structures.

This will enable us immediately after the General Assembly Special Commemorative Meeting to concentrate our efforts on the elaboration of a conceptual model of a renewed United Nations. Such a model should incorporate not only the basic principles for reforming the United Nations, but new goals, objectives and functions for the United Nations of the twenty-first century as well.

I believe that the United Nations goals and purposes are clear for everyone. They are peace, sustainable development, human security and genuine democratization of the highest international bodies to

create a united family of peoples and nations. In this context, I should like to elaborate on a few specific aspects.

First, the role of the Security Council in the resolution of the global issues of our day should be reinforced. To this end, first of all Germany and Japan should become full members of the Security Council. At the same time, steps should be taken so that the views of the States of all regions receive wider consideration in that body.

Secondly, the interaction of global and regional security systems should be enhanced. Today we should take into account that international security systems can be built not only from the top, but also from the bottom, at the regional level.

In Central Asia we keenly feel the need to enhance this regional aspect. That concern lies behind Kazakstan's initiatives concerning the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia and Eurasian union and our active cooperation within the Economic Cooperation Organization. Moreover, the contours of the biggest regional market are taking shape today in Central Asia, where many Asian, Commonwealth of Independent States and European countries could participate. In addition to this, many issues for the development of the region have global importance.

This pertains first of all to the issue of the effective transportation of oil and gas resources of the region, to meet the needs of the development of the world economy in the twenty-first century, as well as to the efforts to combat the transit of drugs and to the cooperative efforts of the world community to preserve the Aral Sea. Unless urgent steps are taken, the environmental consequences of the Aral disaster can easily become an issue of great concern for Eurasia as a whole.

Hence, we must face the most important question: how the renewed United Nations is to interact with the regional and continental system of security and cooperation? There are two different roles that the United Nations may play. The first is the role of a single centre of global security, whose decisions are strictly binding for all regional systems. The shortcoming of such a centre is that the United Nations can unwittingly take the side of one of the parties in a conflict, thus hindering the natural evolution of other growing centres of power in the world.

A second option is the role of an international coordinating body, which would act as the highest independent arbitrator in resolving disputes and clashes between regional structures. The shortcoming here is that it may not be in a position to take timely and effective decisions and prevent a conflict.

Thirdly, similar problems will arise, not only in military and strategic areas but in all areas of human activity — culture, information, science and technology, finance and the economy. This brings us to a question: What should the United Nations be in the twenty-first century? Shall it be a supreme body taking decisions binding upon all nations and international bodies, or shall it be a single, global coordinating tool, a structure for balanced cooperation, mediation and supreme arbitration?

We should begin as of today to focus the best minds of the world on the resolution of these issues. But, in so doing, we should avoid irresponsible actions towards the United Nations, as they can unbalance the established system of international relations. Therefore, the selection of a new United Nations model should be well thought through and be a clear expression of the will of all nations of the world.

Finally, if we want the United Nations significantly to minimize the potential for global conflict by the end of this century and increase the chances for peace and development, all we can do is to ensure that each and every one of us willingly contributes his best efforts to the noble task of United Nations reforms. If we manage to address these issues in 1995, then we could consider at some future session of the General Assembly a special agenda item entitled "The United Nations reforms — an adequate response to the challenges of the twenty-first century".

The first issue we will then have to face will be how to finance these changes. Three years ago, at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, I made a relatively simple and radical proposal to resolve this issue, namely, to set up a fund for peace-keeping efforts with each nation contributing to it by reducing its defence budget by 1 per cent annually. This proposal is still valid.

One last thing: Kazakstan fully shares the goals and proposals in the statement by the President of the United States, William Clinton, for his initiatives coincide with our policy, which is geared towards decisively fighting such present-day scourges as corruption, organized crime and the spread of drugs and terrorism.

I sincerely wish all of us and those who come after us every success in building the United Nations as a united family of peoples and nations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Kazakstan for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of the Republic of Kazakstan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Heydar Alirza ogly Aliyev, President of the Azerbaijani Republic

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Heydar Alirza ogly Aliyev, President of the Azerbaijani Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Heydar Alirza ogly Aliyev, President of the Azerbaijani Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Aliyev (*interpretation from Russian*): On behalf of the people of Azerbaijan and on my own personal behalf I extend heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which has made a great contribution to strengthening peace, security and stability in our world.

Great positive changes have occurred during the 50 years since the establishment of the United Nations, involving the complete rebuilding of the world and the practical implementation of the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The main point here is that irrespective of the sharp confrontation during the cold war it was possible to avoid a new world war. Colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination have become history. People have won the chance to master their destiny and have obtained national freedom and independence. The proclamation of independence and sovereignty by the republics of the former Soviet Union was a historic event. Confirmation of common human values, particularly the ideas of freedom, democracy and human rights, has become widely expanded. Thoroughgoing democratic changes in State structures, in the economy and in all areas of life have become extremely important factors for many countries.

Each Member State of the United Nations, in particular the big Powers with developed economies and democratic traditions, has made a contribution to strengthening peace and security and the attainment of these results. But the United Nations, which has grown over the past 50 years into the most authoritative and influential international organization in the history of mankind, has played a special role. I believe that the financial difficulties facing the Organization will be overcome and that it will have success in its work in the future.

It is gratifying to us to take note of this and it fills us with admiration, but peace in the world has not become more secure, perfect or ideal. Problems involving the violation of the norms of international law in inter-State relations, international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the elimination of hunger and poverty, and the prevention of environmental disasters all require a radical solution. The appearance of aggressive nationalism and separatism in various regions of the world, which lead to bloody conflicts and to untold suffering for millions of people, remain threats to the peace.

For more than seven years now the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against Azerbaijan has been going on, with the aim of annexing the Nagorny Karabakh region of our country. Armed formations belonging to Armenia have occupied more than 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan. More than 1 million citizens of our country, who are now refugees, have been evicted from the occupied territories and are now living in tent camps in the most difficult circumstances. The Security Council of the United Nations has adopted four resolutions demanding the unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed formations from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. However, these resolutions are not being implemented by the aggressor and therefore the peace process within the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has so far not yielded the desired results.

I appeal to the distinguished Heads of State and Government, to the United Nations, and to the OSCE to render effective assistance to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders.

In expressing the will of the people of Azerbaijan, I declare that we condemn all kinds of aggression in any part of the world. We want peace: peace in the whole world, peace in our region, and peace and good-

neighbourly relations with all States. It is with this hope and belief that I leave this distinguished rostrum.

The President: I thank the President of the Azerbaijani Republic for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Heydar Alirza ogly Aliyev, President of the Azerbaijani Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola.

His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Santos (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): To all those present I should like to address, on my own behalf and on behalf of all the Angolan people that I have the honour to represent here, my warmest salutations to the United Nations.

The journey has not been easy for our Organization. On the date of its foundation the world was just emerging from a devastating war in which about 50 countries were involved, with a tragic balance of 50 million dead and profound trauma and destruction.

The almost immediate bipolarization of the planet between two antagonistic political and economic systems did not contribute to the easy establishment of just principles in favour of international peace and security, even though the United Nations played a praiseworthy role in the liquidation of colonialism, the promotion of human rights and the rights of people, in encouraging development and international cooperation, and in the management and control of small conflicts all over the world.

However, the logic of the so-called cold war generated a frantic race for armament. It is true that various attempts were being made by the United Nations to promote global disarmament and to restrict nuclear arsenals but they were insufficient to dispel the threat that weighed on humanity.

In spite of the balance of terror between the countries holding nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, we think that the United Nations should maintain on its agenda the task of completely eliminating such weapons and promoting concrete action to that end.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the arrival of new political thinking in international relations, the United Nations can resume its action directed towards the construction of a peaceful new world order.

Unfortunately, the United Nations still has neither the unanimity of its Members nor sufficient means to effectively impose its legitimate will to sanction those who disturb the peace and violate civil and democratic order, international laws and human rights. Meanwhile, the political configuration of the contemporary world, in which local, regional and inter-State conflicts constitute the main areas of international tension and threats to peace, demands that the United Nations assume an ever more active role in the promotion and pursuance of political, economic, and social democratization processes. This is the best way to solve ethnic or inter-State conflicts, which in most cases are caused by immediate situations, actions of tyrannical Governments or exclusion policies almost always associated with the phenomenon of Member States' interference in the affairs of other States.

The promotion and safeguarding of human rights and the solution of humanity's global problems, such as those related to the environment, security and development, constitute another priority for the United Nations. Material wealth and food reserves are concentrated in a few countries of the North. Despite the potential of the South, the scourge of hunger, endemic disease and the shortage of drinking water there affect more than two thirds of the world's population, a number that may increase a great deal in the next century and may constitute one of the greatest threats to peace and stability on the planet.

The proportions reached today by various manifestations of extremism and exclusionary activities, such as terrorism, organized crime, separatism, racism, xenophobia and so on, and the issue of preserving the standard of living on the planet negatively affect inter-State relations and call for solutions to be agreed upon by the international community at the highest level.

Sooner or later, this will require the redefinition of United Nations structures and mechanisms of action, particularly the Security Council, which should continue to be the main organ guaranteeing the preservation of world peace. To that end, it needs to act on a more

democratic basis by increasing the number of its permanent members.

Angola considers it urgent, first, to assign a permanent seat in the Security Council to a country from each geographic region that, by its importance, can assume an effective role in the preservation of peace at the regional level and, secondly, to create a body that makes it possible for the various regional mechanisms to function in coordinated and complementary fashion in the search for rapid, effective and balanced solutions to localized conflicts and tensions.

With regard to international economic issues, I believe it is pertinent to say that the world financial system, established under the Bretton Woods institutions, is now inadequate for facing the realities of today's international economic crisis, which is characterized by a widening gap between rich and poor countries and a growing external debt that virtually cancels out any real chances of development. Just as an authentic multipolarization of the world is taking place in the political sphere, in the economic sphere today's reality should be faced through a decentralization of the world financial system. This should be based on both the promotion of commercial integration and regional economic systems and on the strengthening of regional financial institutions in a way that would really encourage self-sustained economic development.

Angola takes a special interest in participating in this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Our entire post-independence history has been closely associated with this international Organization, with which we have always been ready to cooperate in order to solve our problems and pacify our region and from which we have always received clear signs of understanding and solidarity.

In particular, I am referring to the acts of aggression against and occupation of part of our territory by the "apartheid" army, condemned by the Security Council in its resolutions; the Namibian independence process; the improvement made in the critical and complex situation in Southern Africa through the conclusion and implementation of the New York Accord of December 1988; the resolution of Angola's internal conflict on the basis of the Bicesse Accords and the Lusaka Protocol; humanitarian aid to refugees and displaced persons; and the participation of the United Nations, since at least 1989, in Angola's reconstruction efforts, of which the recent donor conference in Brussels is the best example.

In this context, the successive visits to Angola by three Secretaries-General of the United Nations — His Excellency Mr. Kurt Waldheim, His Excellency Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali — deserve to be highlighted for their symbolic and practical significance. All of those visits contributed to advancing efforts for pacification and democratization, not only in Angola but in all of Southern Africa, thus creating ample prospects of economic and social cooperation and development between the countries of the region.

At this very moment, thousands of United Nations soldiers are deployed throughout Angolan territory as guarantors and monitors of the peace process. However, for the mission to be accomplished successfully, it is urgent to accelerate the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, especially as regards the quartering and disarming of UNITA military forces, their integration into the Angolan armed forces and the de-mining and opening of the main roads for the free movement of people and goods. We hope that all of these tasks will be concluded by March next year so that the Government of unity and national reconciliation can then be established, with cadres from UNITA integrated into it.

I would like to avail myself of this rostrum to thank the entire international community for its contribution to the cause of peace and reconciliation in Angola and the means it recently made available to my country for its economic restoration. I would like to appeal to those present for continued financial, technical and material assistance in the economic recovery of Angola. With such support, the Angolan Government intends to consolidate internal peace and become a credible partner of Your Excellencies' Governments in the promotion of bilateral and multilateral trade and investment and in the consolidation of world peace.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Angola for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Vieira (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation*): On 26 June 1945, 51 countries gathered in the city of San Francisco for an international conference that culminated in the historic decision creating the United Nations. Today, 22 October 1995, in the city of New York, 185 States are gathered in this grand General Assembly Hall to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Charter of our universal Organization.

On this occasion I have the great honour and privilege of speaking, on behalf of my country, Guinea-Bissau, to this gathering of illustrious representatives, at a time when the new climate of international relations favours peace and understanding between peoples.

The League of Nations of 1925 and the United Nations of 1945, both emerging from great wars that wounded mankind, were manifestations of a determination to create a framework for international agreement that would foster dialogue and peace.

There can be no doubt that our century will go down in the history of mankind as the century of those two major wars, which took a toll of tens of millions of lives; but it will also be remembered as the century of the cold war that divided the world into two blocs for half a century and the re-emergence of extreme forms of nationalism, with tragic consequences.

This period is also marked by major achievements and great strides by mankind in the fields of science and technology.

Our century has seen a re-emergence in the awareness of Governments and citizens of fundamental values of the human person, including respect for the dignity of the human person, democracy and — above all — the right of peoples to self-determination, which has encouraged the process of decolonization and the eradication of apartheid.

The protection of the environment and the need to preserve the environment are also among our concerns at this time.

A new cultural relationship between man and nature has been forged and rules of conduct aimed at preserving the flora and fauna and biological diversity have been codified. However, despite these major achievements, most of which are the work of our Organization, some critical problems persist.

The precarious economic situation of third-world countries, especially in Africa, aggravated by the extreme poverty of their populations, especially the most vulnerable, such as the elderly, women and children, is a serious threat to international peace and security.

We welcome the current process of disarmament, whose aims are the reduction of the dangers of conflict and tension in the world.

Today, more than ever, the United Nations Charter is a legal, political and moral frame of reference that cannot be side-stepped in international relations.

Guinea-Bissau is convinced that it is imperative to proceed with the necessary reforms within our Organization in order to better respond to the requirements of contemporary international relations in the light of recent developments, which have profound political, economic and social implications for many countries.

In this regard, we welcome efforts aimed at revitalizing the General Assembly, rationalizing its agenda and expanding the Security Council by increasing the number of members on the basis of equitable geographical distribution.

In the name of the principle of universality and parallel representation of divided countries, allow me to reaffirm on this historic occasion our fervent desire to see the Republic of China in Taiwan join the United Nations.

The world today is facing a growing number of tensions and conflicts that threaten world stability and compromise human progress. It is up to Member States to actively support actions aimed at strengthening the United Nations capacity in the prevention of conflict and the maintenance of peace.

In this respect, I would call for greater dialogue and coordination of our efforts in order to forge a world Organization capable of preserving future generations from the scourge of war and to give the poorest and most helpless true reasons for hope, thus safeguarding the common interests of mankind.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Alyaksandr Lukashenka, President of the Republic of Belarus

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Alyaksandr Lukashenka, President of the Republic of Belarus.

His Excellency Mr. Alyaksandr Lukashenka, President of the Republic of Belarus, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Lukashenka (*interpretation from Russian*): I greet all those present on behalf of the Republic of Belarus, a State which, despite the fact that it became independent only four years ago, was a founding member of the United Nations. The people of Belarus made a worthy contribution to the victory over fascism. Our Republic was at the very centre of the world conflagration and lost more than a fourth of its population, but it did not accept fascist tyranny.

The idea of setting up the Organization, an organization capable of ensuring security for all peoples, came to maturity in the crucible of the Second World War. After half a century now, we can say without any doubt that the establishment of the United Nations was truly a historic decision. The prevention of nuclear catastrophe, the collapse of the colonial system, the elimination of apartheid, the unprecedented flights of human genius in science and technology — all of this was achieved, to a large extent, thanks to the Organization whose fiftieth anniversary we are celebrating today.

But the United Nations would do well today to think not so much about what has been done as about what still remains to be done. Unfortunately, on the threshold of the third millennium, the world is still burdened by many problems characteristic of the past: wars; armed conflicts in various regions; terrorism and other types of crime; environmental disasters; poverty; and hunger. Many other things threaten the future of mankind.

The United Nations alone, this universal Organization, which reflects the interests of all peoples of the Earth, can unite the efforts of the community of nations in resolving these problems. We cannot agree with those who cast doubt on the role of the United Nations in the world of the future. Giving up the United Nations would be giving up the very idea of the solidarity of all peoples of Earth in the face of our common problems. If we allowed this to happen, it would be a crime to those who 50 years ago overcame fascism and created this unique mechanism.

I believe that the human mind has made so many discoveries that we need to make the United Nations more effective. We need to find the money for this, and this is possible. The Organization has shown that it was viable in the conditions of the cold war and in bloc confrontation. Now it has to confirm the effectiveness of its actions in our multipolar world. The main thing is to prevent a new rift in the world.

In view of this, we believe the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is fraught with unforeseen consequences for the future of Europe. Belarus, which geographically is at the centre of our continent, has many times in our history been the first to suffer from new confrontation. I am convinced that on the threshold of the third millennium we should not think about the expansion of military and political unions, the placing of nuclear weapons or the expansion of military arsenals. On the contrary, we should try to eliminate the very possibility of wars arising and reduce or completely destroy nuclear weapons.

We can speak here for all to hear because Belarus was the first State in history that voluntarily and without any conditions renounced nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, we found ourselves in a paradoxical situation when our commitment to the ideas of disarmament created serious economic difficulties for the country. We were compelled to divert resources intended for social programmes to destroying weapons that had been accumulated on our territory during the bloc confrontation. I am convinced that for the leaders of the States that participated in the cold war a feeling of justice will prevail and they will help us to resolve this question.

First and foremost, I would like to stress deepening socio-economic problems in various regions, as well as the division of the world into the poor and the rich countries. The new independent States are now in the throes of a very serious socio-economic crisis. The gap, which has been expanding for years now, has brought no one any good.

We should not, therefore, be surprised at — still less should we fear — the integration processes that are now going on. The growing closeness between fraternal countries has the effect of uniting efforts to solve common problems, and it is not a threat to anyone's security or interests.

I am convinced that our peoples will definitely overcome their socio-economic difficulties. I am convinced that the solution of the economic and social problems of Belarus and other countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union will be in the interests of all United Nations Members. Peace and security on Earth are impossible without economic well-being and social stability for the newly independent States.

Another problem — a growing problem and, quite literally, a deadly threat to the security of our peoples — is the worsening environmental situation in the world. The people of Belarus have suffered most of all from the major environmental disaster of our time — the Chernobyl accident. More than 40 per cent of the radioactive particles fell on our territory, and the country was forced to divert more than 20 per cent of its budget to deal with the consequences of this disaster. I hope that the United Nations will not abandon the peoples that suffered from the Chernobyl disaster and leave them to deal with the tragedy themselves.

New threats facing mankind in the late twentieth century cannot be dealt with by peoples unless they renounce national egoism. The major States must think not about diktat, not about subjugating peoples to their influence, but about leadership in the solution of problems facing mankind. Although some people do not like to hear this, the best instrument for coordinating the interests of all peoples is still the United Nations. My country will do everything in its power to make this Organization live up to the hopes placed in it by our peoples.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Belarus for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Alyaksandr Lukashenka, President of the Republic of Belarus, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Stojan Andov, Acting President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Stojan Andov, Acting President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

His Excellency Mr. Stojan Andov, Acting President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was escorted to the rostrum.

Acting President Andov (*spoke in Macedonian; English text furnished by the delegation*): My country's address to this eminent world gathering was to have been given by the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov. He is unable to be here, for he is undergoing medical treatment following the deplorable terrorist attack on his life. Fortunately, the assassination attempt did not achieve its political aim: to destabilize the Republic of Macedonia, to change its democratic and peaceful course and its role as key component of peace in the southern Balkans. This policy will remain the permanent and strategic orientation of the Republic of Macedonia.

I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf on the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, to express sincere appreciation for the support and sympathy that representatives from the United Nations and numerous Heads of State have conveyed to the Republic of Macedonia at this sensitive time.

The gains that have been made through the existence of the United Nations are major and significant indeed. The Charter has survived the test of the past five decades and continues to be the basic framework on which world peace, security, cooperation and economic and social development can successfully be built.

In the past five decades the world has changed substantially. As a result — and quite rightly — we all face the issue of the need for reform of the Organization. The reforms we envisage are, above all, aimed at increasing the efficiency of the work done by the United Nations and its bodies, strengthening the role of the United Nations in preserving world peace, enhancing collective security and harmonizing global economic and social development and political cooperation.

The Republic of Macedonia has shown itself to be a key factor for peace in the southern Balkans. We have opted for a peaceful and legitimate course to achieve for the Macedonian people the right to self-determination and independence. We have opted for a peaceful approach and for political negotiations for dissolution of the

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and have refused to take part in the inter-ethnic war in its regions. We have opted for refraining from the use of force to violate existing borders and have proclaimed independence within the constitutional and internationally recognized borders. We have also actively carried out the policy of good-neighbourliness and equidistance towards our neighbours and, thus, overcome the historic causes of what has been a bone of contention. Last, but not least, we have opted for speedy market reforms, democracy and the integration of European countries.

This domestic state and international orientation of the Republic of Macedonia and its key role with regard to peace in the southern Balkans was supported by the United Nations through the deployment of forces of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force in the Republic of Macedonia. This helped to prevent an escalation of the war to the south of the Balkans and gave a clear signal that the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Macedonia are also a matter of concrete interest to the United Nations. In addition, under the aegis of the United Nations a start was made in normalization of relations between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece.

The Republic of Macedonia remains ready to take a full and active part in and to contribute fully and actively to the United Nations in the hope that, on the basis of the Charter, we shall finally secure the right to have the Organization refer to us by our constitutional name — the Republic of Macedonia — and that we shall receive active support in surmounting the damage caused by sanctions and blockades.

The President: I thank the Acting President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Stojan Andov, Acting President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Michal Kováč, President of the Slovak Republic

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Michal Kováč, President of the Slovak Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Michael Kováč, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Kováč (*spoke in Slovak; English text furnished by the delegation*): It is my great pleasure to address this most distinguished assembly of representatives of the States Members of the United Nations, as well as leading representatives of this world Organization. I am convinced that the festive moments we are now sharing during the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly will mark the beginning of a new era in our purposeful and responsible approach to the future evolution of the international community.

Slovakia is one of the youngest Members of the United Nations. At the same time, as a part of the former Czechoslovakia, it shares the traditions as one of the founders of the United Nations. For our country, the United Nations is the most important world organization and has been playing an irreplaceable role in international relations for half a century. We are proud that Slovak diplomats were present at its founding. Indeed, one of them was the very first Legal Counsel of the United Nations, with the rank of Assistant Secretary-General — a distinguished Slovak jurist and diplomat, Mr. Ivan Kerno.

The United Nations was established after a failed attempt to gain absolute world hegemony and in the euphoric atmosphere of the victory over that attempt. It was founded in order to prevent a recurrence of that catastrophe and to save future generations from the suffering and horrors of war. The Slovak Republic highly appreciates both current and past endeavours of the United Nations in the field of international relations.

The United Nations is a living organism; it enjoys periods of success but is aware of its weaknesses as well. On the one hand, we can appreciate the past and present role of the Organization in resolving issues related to peace and security. On the other hand, social issues, as well as the process of strengthening democracy and protecting human rights, will require a more sensitive and, above all, a more effective approach in the future. We are currently witnessing growth in the United Nations role in the field of economic and social development, where a certain disproportion exists. The international community cannot afford, in its own interests, not to address this disproportion.

The current trend clearly reveals its common denominators to be interdependence and interconnectedness. The United Nations faces an uneasy but unavoidable task. This task requires it to resolve

problems connected with changes in its institutional structure and administrative and legal mechanisms and, last but not least, connected with the adoption of measures that can lead to the more efficient functioning of the whole system and its invigoration by outstanding human potential. The United Nations can only change in line with the wishes and desires of its Members. If we want these structural changes to have a positive impact on the international situation, the political will and agreement of our individual Governments are of vital importance.

The United Nations has a relatively short but very dynamic history. Even during its brief existence it has made many demonstrable contributions to the well-being of mankind. However, voices can be heard today expressing pessimism about the future of our Organization. We prefer to believe that this Organization is ensuring its continued viability through its actions. Let me refer to a Slovak proverb:

"If you do nothing you cannot make a mistake."

In this respect, the willingness and ability of the United Nations to assume and continue to accept its burden of great responsibility deserve our highest appreciation and, especially, our ongoing willingness to participate in the fulfilment of the new and more demanding tasks before the Organization.

Slovakia is aware of its obligations towards the United Nations. Our new State has successfully taken part in many United Nations activities. Let me mention only one: our participation in peace-keeping and humanitarian operations. I wish to assure Members that my country will continue to act in conformity with its international obligations and in the general spirit of cooperation between States in the United Nations.

Allow me finally to express my sincere conviction that the United Nations, as it meets to sum up its achievements on the occasion of its golden jubilee, is fully equipped to find non-schematic and constructive solutions to even the most intricate current and future problems. Our conviction is strengthened as cooperation between us, as individual members of the international community, grows deeper and stronger. I would like to assure the Assembly that Slovakia wishes to be and will be a solid and reliable partner in this process.

The President: I thank the President of the Slovak Republic for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Michal Kováč, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Amata Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Amata Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

His Excellency Mr. Amata Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Kabua: I bring warm greetings from the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I extend to you, Mr. President, and to the Secretary-General, on behalf of the people of the Marshall Islands, our warmest congratulations on your leadership.

Let us recognize on this historic occasion the contribution of the founding fathers and framers of the United Nations and its Charter. Their vision has contributed to an ever-increasing consciousness of the prerequisites to world peace.

Today is an occasion to celebrate half a century of the existence of the United Nations and its accomplishments, and also to reflect over how, collectively, we may better chart our path and more clearly articulate our goals for the next 50 years or so.

There is today growing evidence of the human capacity for wider affection and loyalty, as demonstrated by increasing interdependence and integration. Yet the fomentation of conflicts and persecution continues to thrive unabated. An entrenched mind-set continues to place ethnicity and the nation-State above all else, frustrating the realization of the vision enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The current political landscape is now vastly different from that of 50 years ago. This requires the United Nations critically to examine its performance and structures in search of practical solutions. It is imperative, therefore, that those elements which are antiquated and no longer minister to the needs of a continually changing humanity be swept away and relegated to the currents of history.

Fundamental principles governing the operation of the essential organs of the United Nations, such as the

Security Council, should be given particular attention; so, too, must the International Court of Justice and the conditions which continue to restrain its effectiveness. No less important are the perennial financial constraints and conditions hampering the work of the United Nations.

This session will witness the sharing of many constructive and far-sighted recommendations. I propose the holding of an international convocation before the turn of the century. With firm resolve and clear vision, we must endeavour to make the cause of peace the object of our consultations and seek by every means in our power to establish the unity of all the nations. These consultations should lead to the formulation of binding agreements, treaties and covenants, the provisions of which should be inviolable and definite.

Humanity's yearning for peace has already created an impetus, the gathering momentum of which, despite temporary setbacks, cannot be restrained from achieving its ultimate goal. It is in the spirit of this momentum that we in the Marshall Islands find it most difficult to understand the need for and the wisdom underlying the resumption of nuclear tests in the Pacific.

Often heard in this Hall is the resounding siren which calls for the practical application of universal democratic principles. Accordingly, what other act could be more befitting and courageous on the part of the United Nations than to bring about in its own Charter those fundamental changes that will ensure the full exercise of those same principles?

These changes must be carried out with soul-searching deliberation in order to ensure the strengthening of an institution whose foundation must be unshakeably firm. Predicated on humanity's yearning for a future that bears the promise of peace and prosperity, our duty is to devise the most acceptable solutions borne of our deepest convictions and shared vision.

The United Nations constitutes the most legitimate forum through which the interests and concerns of individual nations can be expressed, and their fears allayed. We are therefore charged with an immense responsibility to develop ways and means to enable the citizens of the world fully to enjoy the benefits and prosperity of universal peace.

It is with this in mind that I feel moved to urge that the perennial rhetoric must cease. The United Nations must become a truly international governing body and assume the reins of administering those affairs which affect all nations and which are best managed at the collective and at the global level.

The transition we are witnessing is not an oscillation, nor a fluctuation, nor even a temporary shift in the affairs of humanity in which normalcy will eventually be restored after a short while. It is a global transition, irreversible in its forward momentum and firm in its purpose. We must therefore recognize the futility of insisting upon the preservation of the sanctity of the status quo in the face of these inevitable global changes. Failure to do so would perpetuate the existence of an order which is lamentably defective in its capacity to meet the requirements of a world in transition. Change must take place. Our noble task, therefore, is to effect the necessary transformation in the patterns of the prevailing order so as to be able to cause the efflorescence of the goal of a global society. The status quo can no longer remain sacrosanct. It is no longer manageable. It has got to be changed.

The building of a strong foundation based on shared values, exemplified by the founding fathers of the United Nations 50 years ago, must remain our unshakeable purpose. But our determination and resolve must be strengthened, and must be imaginative beyond all past records so that entrenched barriers are removed and the basis for laying down the foundation of an unassailable new world order is assured permanently.

May God bless the United Nations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Amata Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic.

His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Bongo *(interpretation from French)*: We are met here today to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of

the signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco on 26 June 1945. The United Nations system is the object of much criticism by international public opinion. Some say that the United Nations is merely a forum in which to make speeches. Others say that it is an ineffective organization.

Though such comments are often excessive, they nevertheless reflect the disarray that afflicts the international community in the face of certain tragic situations. The record of our Organization over half a century enables us, however, to draw some lessons from the experience we have acquired. Thus, we should together define new undertakings that will help us to ensure the achievement of the purposes set forth in the Charter.

As we contemplate those purposes 50 years later, what is the situation of our Organization, when we judge by the pictures of the terrible events that we see, the persistence of local and regional conflicts in Bosnia, Cyprus, Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi and the Middle East, to mention only those; or if we judge from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, a daily menace to international peace and security?

If we look at the under-development that persists today, with its train of evils, some might be tempted to say that the United Nations has not played a positive role worthy to go down in history.

However, despite the inadequacies that can be listed, many of which can be attributed to the East-West confrontation, the United Nations has none the less shown that it is indispensable. It has shown, moreover, that it remains a centre for the harmonization of the actions of nations in the attainment of the great ideals enshrined in the San Francisco Charter.

Indeed, the United Nations can take credit above all for ensuring respect for human rights by combatting racism and all forms of discrimination. It has also contributed greatly to democratization, which is under way in many countries.

However, while it is legitimate to draw satisfaction from the progress made, we must recognize that this could have been considerably greater. To that end, in our quest for peace, we should have shown greater imagination and realism. Instead, we remained content too often with attitudes that assuaged our consciences without resolving the problems. And yet, we all know that efforts for peace and development depend on us, and only on us, and we also know that we can bring about peace and achieve development if we all want to do so together.

I say "together" because the challenges to be faced on the eve of the third millennium are so complex and so numerous, and often cut across national boundaries. Thus, without international cooperation and active political will, it would be virtually impossible for any country acting alone, powerful though it might be, to bring about an effective and definitive response.

Undoubtedly, in the course of these years the United Nations has made remarkable efforts and set in motion vast programmes: the struggle against the illicit trafficking of drugs and international terrorism, and the fight against under-development; and the campaign against acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and other diseases. Unfortunately, the results achieved so far have not satisfied our hopes and the expectations of our peoples.

We must therefore commit ourselves even more to pool our resources in order to remove from the world all the ills that beset us and to build the peaceful world of which the framers of the Charter dreamed. From that viewpoint, we need a stronger Organization, one capable of responding to the needs of the hour and preventing future dangers. The United Nations Charter has given us the means. Let us adopt those means in keeping with the times, and let us take action.

The far-reaching changes of recent years have considerably influenced the course of international life. The time has come to revisit the practices of the United Nations in order to bring them into line with the new context. In this process, the Security Council, the principal organ for the maintenance of peace, should be reformed in order to embrace the present dimensions of our Organization.

These are a few reflections to which, I believe, we must apply rapid responses if we wish the United Nations truly to serve the interests of mankind as a whole.

Many studies with a view to revitalizing the United Nations have been published in recent years. Let us bring them together and draw from them any lessons that might enable our Organization to enhance its effectiveness. And since an intergovernmental working group has just been established in order to explore those ideas, let us accelerate its conclusions so that we can take the necessary decisions.

For the time being, let us strengthen those mechanisms that have been tried, proved and unanimously accepted in our common struggle for peace and economic and social progress.

With regard to the maintenance of peace and the settlement of conflicts, the United Nations should, in most cases, encourage resort to peaceful means. These means, which include dialogue, negotiation and mutual respect, in the end always demonstrate their effectiveness. Very often they prevail over the use of force.

Unfortunately, these means are not always effective. Resort to force then becomes indispensable. In those cases, let us do so in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter and, if possible, in cooperation with other regional political or military organizations from the areas where conflict has broken out.

In order to carry out all of these activities, the United Nations needs financial means. We must provide these through the contributions of States. Without them, our Organization would be like an automobile without fuel.

The struggle for peace, especially now, is a struggle for development. The absence of economic development today is as much of a threat to peace and security as is military confrontation. The picture as we see it today is far from encouraging. Indeed, it is a source of deep concern. Resources earmarked for development are dwindling in a disturbing way instead of increasing. This poses a threat to emerging democracies and a danger especially for Africa. Our deliberations should seriously address that issue.

At this stage, I should like to express the wish that relations between countries of the North and those of the South will be characterized by greater solidarity and understanding.

I wish to propose that a real dialogue, a permanent dialogue, be established, under the auspices of the United Nations, between Heads of State and Government of the South and those of the North. In that way, we may be able to find solutions to our common problems. The recent meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations, such as the Rio Summit on the environment, the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development and the recent meeting on women's issues in Beijing, provide platforms replete with useful proposals. We should be able to put these to use in order to give our Organization the new impetus it will need as it celebrates its fiftieth anniversary.

The President: I thank the President of the Gabonese Republic for his statement.

His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, President of the United Mexican States

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, President of the United Mexican States.

His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Zedillo (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am attending this ceremony to express Mexico's pleasure at seeing the General Assembly celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

For reasons of history and conviction, Mexico was among the founders of the United Nations. Since then, it has actively contributed its diplomacy and its vote to the achievement by the Organization of a membership of 185, which confers upon it universal representation.

Mexico recognizes that for half a century the United Nations has been contributing decisively to avoiding a global conflagration and to promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In today's world, serious problems persist which are at the root of conflicts that in the past gave rise to confrontations; globalization and interdependence coexist alongside trends towards isolationism and intolerance. Restrictive nationalism, attçmpts at genocide and fragmentation, environmental deterioration and drug trafficking, economic disparities, social inequality and poverty are the current threats to peace and security.

For this reason, the principles underlying and the *raison d'être* of the birth of the United Nations are today still fully valid. Also for this reason, we must strengthen the United Nations as the principal universal forum for dialogue and peace, for security and cooperation between peoples, and for ensuring that the relations among States are governed by international law.

The United Nations must be the forum for achieving a world free of nuclear threat. Along with the nations of

Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico has established a vast region free of nuclear weapons. Mexico urges the international community to continue working to conclude a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

The United Nations must actively promote a comprehensive strategy against drug trafficking. It must work towards ensuring that the countries that account for the bulk of the demand for narcotics do their fair share in fighting this illicit trafficking.

The United Nations can and should participate more vigorously in creating a culture of responsibility towards the environment and in cooperating to preserve the rich diversity of our planet.

The United Nations constitutes a particularly useful forum for promoting respect for human rights and the culture of indigenous communities, for spreading democracy and justice, and for curbing all forms of racism, xenophobia and exclusion. The United Nations must contribute with much greater creativity and resolve towards promoting development and combating poverty and towards ensuring the observance of the rights of women and of the disabled. The United Nations must contribute to enabling all peoples to benefit from the opportunities offered by the world economy.

International peace and security must be founded on development and equity. Peace is inseparable from development, and security is inseparable from prosperity. By sowing the seeds of development, we shall reap peace.

In those purposes lies the relevance of the United Nations; they renew and enhance the tasks of the Organization, and they give its mission permanence and vitality. To strengthen the fulfilment of this mission, Mexico favours a reform of the United Nations system. Mexico will work for a reform that is respectful of the purposes and principles that gave birth to the Organization, a reform that ensures a more democratic, transparent and efficient system, better equipped to forge a future of peace.

Mexico reiterates its confidence in the United Nations as the forum that most fully represents the diversity of mankind and the plurality of nations, and reaffirms that it will continue to work with our Organization for peace and for the progress of all peoples.

The President: I thank the President of the United Mexican States for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Saparmurat Niyazov, President of Turkmenistan

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Saparmurat Niyazov, President of Turkmenistan.

His Excellency Mr. Saparmurat Niyazov, President of Turkmenistan, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Niyazov (*interpretation from Russian*): As I address the General Assembly on behalf of the independent State of Turkmenistan for the first time, I would like at the outset to congratulate all of you, Your Excellencies, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the world's highest forum.

Since declaring its independence, and since becoming a Member of the United Nations on 2 March 1992, Turkmenistan has been able to participate independently in the affairs of the world community at a time when a new world model is being shaped. The twentieth-century ideological confrontation between blocs is gone, and mankind must choose which way to go. Turkmenistan has made its choice on the basis of principle, by declaring its firm adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. We stand together with those who believe in the philosophy of uniting the world while recognizing the differences that exist; we stand together with those who recognize the primacy of the United Nations in devising programmes of civilized partnership free from diktat and the imposition of ideas and ways of life.

Turkmenistan supports efforts to improve the United Nations and its structures. The world has changed, and so have the conditions under which States exist. This must be reflected also in the work of the United Nations. We agree that it is necessary to enlarge the Security Council so that it adequately represents the interests of all States and regions. Striving for the creation of a new, civilized world order must involve the democratization of the decision-making mechanism and the participation of all States in this process.

The new non-polar world is a community of equal partners, where countries are not divided into the small and the large, the central and the peripheral. There

should be no elite countries with special powers and prerogatives that rightfully belong to the entire world community. Such an approach would enhance responsibility for the implementation of United Nations decisions and for their effective fulfilment; this is the main issue on the agenda of the General Assembly at its current session.

Mr. Nujoma (President of Namibia), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

This problem is relevant because, unfortunately, optimistic expectations that the end of the cold war would make the world a safer place have not materialized. The new realities have not solved the old problems, and the emergence of independent States has given birth to new conflicts in various regions of the globe.

We are painfully aware of their effects in our part of the world, in Asia. Given its enormous human potential coupled with its natural and intellectual resources, our continent has every possibility to become the richest and most prosperous region in the world. Unfortunately, instability and long-standing regional conflicts have become a permanent political backdrop in Asia, which considerably hinders the resolution of matters relating to domestic development. Therefore there is a strong need for that continent to consider such vitally important issues as the creation of a more just and equitable order in the areas of the economy, information and cultural exchanges. Of no less importance is the task of halting attempts to form political blocs on the basis of linguistic, religious or geographic commonality.

Accordingly, Turkmenistan has embarked upon the road of seizing this historic opportunity for independent development; after all, the last Turkmen State existed eight centuries ago. The Turkmen nation is the successor of the world's most ancient civilizations, such as those of the Parthians, the Seljuks and others. During their centuries-old history, replete with drama, triumph and tragedy, the Turkmen people accumulated a powerful spiritual potential while preserving their national identity. Basing ourselves on this historical foundation and on recent experience, we have managed to preserve social stability in this crucial period.

Within a short time we have developed and implemented programmes of national State-building and have established links with the rest of the world. The model of our statehood is consonant with the national character and traditions of the Turkmen people and reflects universal human principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We harmonize each step that we take, on the one hand, with the national interests of Turkmenistan and, on the other, with the requirements of regional stability and the strengthening of international security. Furthermore, we are becoming increasingly convinced that the former is inseparable from the latter.

This has particular importance for us: Turkmenistan is located at a major world crossroads; it has more than a quarter of the world's deposits of hydrocarbons and it ranks fourth in natural gas reserves. This clearly underscores that our policy of neutrality is correct and will meet the interests of international cooperation, bearing in mind Turkmenistan's geographical location. It is from this that we draw the logic of Turkmenistan's policy of constructive neutrality; we appeal to this high forum of Heads of State or Government for support for our initiative.

We are ready to cooperate fully with all so that our potential is used for common good on the basis of equal partnership and mutual benefit. It is destiny's choice that in terms of international relations Turkmenistan should be a part of both Europe and Asia. In this context, we fully share the view of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, that new connecting roads should go through Turkmenistan and its neighbouring countries and that a transcontinental link between Europe and Asia should be built.

This thought is consonant with our firm belief that there is today a new region, formed of the States of Central Asia, the Middle East, South-West Asia, parts of the Caucasus and the Near East. Many countries of this region have become members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which aims at developing active partnership between regions, particularly with the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the European Union. Next year Turkmenistan will assume the presidency of the ECO and will spare no effort to promote those beneficial processes. In this context, we highly appreciate the initiative of France to host the first summit of Heads of State of Europe and Asia in spring next year.

Turkmenistan pursues a policy of permanent positive neutrality, strictly adhering in practice to the rules of international conduct incumbent upon a neutral State. In this connection I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Heads of State or Government who have backed our initiative both at the bilateral level and within the framework of the current session of the General

Assembly. I would like to express gratitude to the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement that unanimously voiced their support for Turkmenistan's policy of neutrality at their eleventh summit, recently held at Cartagena. We are grateful to States members of the ECO and to our neighbours for their understanding of our good intentions and objectives. Neutral Turkmenistan is ready to promote United Nations goals in implementing its programme of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. We recognize that the status of neutrality implies not only rights but also responsibilities, which we fully undertake and are ready to fulfil in accordance with the principles of the United Nations.

For centuries, Turkmenistan was known for its unique Akhalteke horses, its wonderful carpets and its natural resources. Today it is striving to be known in the world for its political position. Magtimguly, a Turkmen classical writer and philosopher, once said, "There is no need for words of irritation or spite; my nation does not accept any spite". Those words, spoken two centuries ago, have acquired new meaning today. Independent, democratic and neutral Turkmenistan will take part in common endeavours towards the achievement of goodness, fairness and humanism, and towards the triumph of the ideals of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I thank the President of Turkmenistan for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Saparmurat Niyazov, President of Turkmenistan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Guntis Ulmanis, President of the Republic of Latvia

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Guntis Ulmanis, President of the Republic of Latvia.

His Excellency Mr. Guntis Ulmanis, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Ulmanis (*spoke in Latvian; English text furnished by the delegation*): I congratulate the United Nations on its golden anniversary. It is my wish that our work may be harmonious and productive during this period of celebration, remembrance and appraisal.

The peoples of the United Nations, in establishing the Organization, were determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. This end was sought at a time when hope and idealism prevailed in the international community.

Latvia should have been one of the original signatories of the Charter of the United Nations, but was not because it was under occupation at that time. However, the United Nations message of freedom and equality helped to sustain hope in Latvia during the long years of occupation. For their part, Latvians and their Baltic brethren in exile turned to the United Nations, seeking to return the Baltic States to the community of nations. Today, as a Member State of the United Nations, Latvia participates in efforts to improve the Organization.

Much has been achieved during the existence of the United Nations. Peace and reconciliation have been made possible through preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping under United Nations auspices. Humanitarian assistance has been brought to crisis points around the world, ensuring survival and shelter for millions of people. The Organization has been a forum in which initiatives vitally important for humanity have been launched.

The end of the cold war has given us an opportunity to fulfil the vision of the founders of the United Nations: the creation of a global order in which the principles of the Charter are respected and its purposes are achieved. Still, the present situation in the world evokes historical analogies with the era in which the League of Nations assumed responsibility for collective security. A generation of Latvians still alive today clearly recalls the results of aggression and its appeasement in 1939. I say this with full accountability, because I know the road to Calvary that has been travelled by Latvia and its people.

Since its establishment, the United Nations has sought to meet the various challenges to international peace and security. Threats in the modern era differ from those that existed prior to the Second World War. Conflict avoidance mechanisms such as preventive diplomacy and other confidence-building measures have become fundamental for the maintenance of international peace and security. Modern threats challenge States and people indiscriminately. No one is immune to the effects of transnational crime, terrorism and trafficking in narcotics and nuclear materials. These problems do not respect national boundaries; States and societies cannot solve them individually. Indeed, interdependence benefits each State individually and sustains the whole.

The watchword for this session is "reform". Latvia actively participates in the efforts to reform and strengthen the United Nations System, in order that it may more effectively serve the peoples of our planet. The changes and uncertainty in the world will determine the nature of reform.

The operation of the Security Council must continue to become more transparent and open, while preserving the Council's effectiveness. Its expansion must increase the role of small countries, respect the principle of equitable geographical distribution and take into account the new geopolitical realities of the post-cold-war era.

Reforms to improve the financial situation of the United Nations must be two-pronged: innovative financing mechanisms must be developed and the existing assessment mechanism must be corrected to reflect fully the principle of sovereign equality. Reforms must address the obstacles that prevent many Member States from meeting their assessments in full and on time.

World conferences in Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing have adopted Declarations and Programmes of Action the implementation of which is dependent on the resolve of States. In accordance with the recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights, Latvia has established an independent State Human Rights Office. An important and constructive role in its establishment was played by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its office in Latvia.

The survival of humanity is unimaginable without serious measures to protect our environment. To this end, Latvia is seeking to hold, at the dawn of the new century, an international conference on disarmament and its relationship to the environment and to development.

Every task is achievable, if only States have the necessary determination and will. Rainis, the Latvian poet and Nobel Prize nominee, has said: "That which transforms, will survive." Thus, the United Nations must change, so that our aspirations for the next century may come to fruition.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the Republic of Latvia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Guntis Ulmanis, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson, President of Ireland

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear an address by Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson, President of Ireland.

Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Robinson: The 51 States that founded this Organization in 1945 wrought well. The United Nations has become the first universal organization of States in human history; and it has shaped the whole structure of international relations through the second half of the twentieth century.

But our Special Commemorative Meeting will be an empty ritual, quickly forgotten, if we limit ourselves to congratulation. This is a time to adapt and renew what we have inherited; a time for vision, equal now to that of half a century ago; above all a time for Member States to make a new commitment and carry it through in action.

We are close to the end of a century and near to the opening of a new millennium. Was there ever a time of such possibility? Was there ever a time for such concern? Humankind now holds the fate of all other species in its hands; it fills the planet; it owns the Earth.

How shall we organize ourselves to meet this awesome responsibility? Human nature will not change, but throughout history, humanity has also shown a deep capacity for compassion and for solidarity — initially to family, and then to wider kin, to clan, to tribe, to city and to nation. Can we now learn to extend our solidarity and compassion to the whole human family in all its rich diversity; and beyond it, to all other life on the planet, which is now ours to conserve or to destroy? Fragile and transient we may be as individuals but we are stewards for all the life we know and for the Earth which bears it.

Those of us who exercise leadership of nations at this time will have to understand and accept this enormous responsibility. We live in a world of sovereign States: a world where conflict is a constant danger and weapons grow endlessly in power; a world where States on occasion collapse in anarchy and where the passion and fear aroused in ethnic conflict can lead to genocide. It is a world where problems of ecology and climate and resources are global; where population grows; where poverty, hunger and injustice oppress millions of people.

This is our world in the late twentieth century. At the centre we need an effective universal Organization which will address global problems in the common interest; which will avert or end war; advance human rights; establish a rule of law based on justice between States; mobilize the human capacity for compassion and solidarity to help the disadvantaged; protect the defenceless; and promote human freedom and potential.

We have such an Organization in place and we can adapt and develop it. But let us be honest and speak plainly.

Today, on its fiftieth birthday, the United Nations is in crisis. The whole future of the United Nations as an effective global Organization is in question. Its authority is uncertain, its financial situation dire. Its Member States give it tasks which exceed its present capacity. They stint and limit their support and then blame it for lack of success in enterprises which their own lack of support has doomed to failure.

I have just come back from a visit to Rwanda and I know at first hand the tragic consequences which this can have. If we do not act together soon to change this, if we do not infuse the United Nations and the family of organizations which has grown around it with a new sense of purpose and a new sense of direction — a genuine global ethic — then I fear that the praise we give to the United Nations from this rostrum over these days will come in time to be read as its epitaph.

It is the view of the Irish Government that four steps could be taken in this year to transform the situation and infuse the United Nations with new vigour.

First must be finance. The United Nations is grinding to a halt for lack of it. Just imagine if each of us who comes to this rostrum were to limit what we say to 16 words: my Government has met all its assessed contributions in full — we have paid what we owe. What an impact that would have, what an anniversary gift for the Organization! Later perhaps we might begin to study various proposals which have been made for other, more autonomous means of financing the United Nations and its agencies. Of course, one accepts that there is room for greater efficiency in the United Nations as in many large public-service organizations throughout the world. But this can in no way excuse the failure to pay contributions.

Secondly, the Security Council, in conjunction with the Secretary-General and drawing on his advice, should examine, clarify and codify its procedures for undertaking and running peace-keeping operations and enforcement action. To restore its authority it must ensure that the decisions it takes and the mandates it gives are clear and that there will be both a determination and a capacity on the part of all concerned to carry them through.

Thirdly, it is time to consider seriously how to ensure that in the early stages of a crisis, when a peace-keeping operation is urgently needed and when it may be most effective, the United Nations will be in a position to respond. We should consider what more can be done to provide stand-by units — military and police. For example, is it not possible to think about proposals which have been made for a modest international volunteer force at the disposal of the Secretary-General under the direction of the Security Council?

Fourthly, it is time now to take decisions on the enlargement of the Council to make it more representative and thereby increase its authority.

These steps, in the view of the Irish Government, would be a beginning. It is a modest programme; it is feasible and realistic and it would give us confidence for the many further changes which will be necessary to strengthen the authority and the capacity of the United Nations and fit it to address the problems of the new millennium.

The Acting President: I thank the President of Ireland for her statement.

Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Wim Kok, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Wim Kok, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

His Excellency Mr. Wim Kok, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Kok: First of all, I would like to join those who have already paid tribute to the United Nations on its fiftieth anniversary.

This Commemorative Meeting is a good opportunity to reflect on both the achievements and the shortcomings of the United Nations.

We have to ask ourselves why, after 50 years, so few of the original ideals laid down in the Charter have been fully realized. When doing this, we have to be aware that we, the Member States, play a crucial role in every success or failure of the United Nations.

The main task before us is to come to grips with reality. We must determine what it is that we want from the United Nations and how much we are willing to pay, politically and financially, in order to let the Organization do its work.

We are well aware of the fact that the Organization is facing huge problems reconciling the tasks it is supposed to carry out with the means its Member States are willing to provide. Indeed, in the last few years, the international community has enthusiastically made demands on the United Nations on an ever-increasing scale but without showing a similar degree of enthusiasm in providing the necessary financial means.

The Member States must learn to be more realistic in what they ask of the United Nations. To that end, we need agreement on the core functions of the United Nations, we need a realistic assessment of the capabilities of the United Nations to perform these core functions, we need agreement on a division of labour within the Organization as well as with other international organizations, we need recognition of the fact that in order to be relevant the United Nations needs a more result-oriented approach and we need to bring the debate on reforming the United Nations to a concrete end so that the United Nations can adapt to new realities and new challenges.

The Netherlands strongly supports multilateralism. We need the United Nations: there is no alternative. We still adhere to the tasks described in the Charter: the maintenance of peace and security, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and respect for the rule of international law. But we are facing immense new challenges as well, such as the problems related to the environment and sustainable development, overpopulation, intra-State conflicts, drugs and terrorism.

I agree with the agenda as described this morning by President Clinton to intensify our efforts in the fight against international organized crime in all its aspects.

We welcome the establishment of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. The Netherlands is willing to seek support for this approach and work with other Member States towards practical solutions. I would like to see the process of reform culminating in concrete decisions to be taken ultimately in 1998.

Structure and working methods have to be modernized. The United Nations needs a more efficient and effective management avoiding duplication and overlap. The Swedish Prime Minister, Mr. Ingvar Carlsson, has taken the initiative to instal a group of Heads of State or Government that will try to actively guide the process of reform of the United Nations. The Netherlands is happy to take part in this initiative and will support any action that will give an impetus to the dynamics of the process of reform and renewal. The Heads of State or Government are getting together tomorrow morning in order to discuss how to proceed further.

The current cash-flow crisis of the Organization is extremely serious. If no action is taken, the United Nations will run out of cash some time next year. I should like to emphasize that all Member States have to honour their obligation under the Charter and under international law to pay their contributions to the United Nations in full, on time and without conditions. This is a *sine qua non* on which the very existence of the United Nations is based.

To sum up, we cannot do without a strong United Nations. Much of what the United Nations has accomplished over the past 50 years is too useful and too precious to give up, but we have to show a sense of urgency in our efforts to prepare the Organization for the its important work in the twenty-first century.

The Acting President: I thank the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Wim Kok, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency the Right Honourable John G. M. Compton, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development of Saint Lucia

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency the Right Honourable John G. M. Compton, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development of Saint Lucia.

His Excellency the Right Honourable John G. M. Compton, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development of Saint Lucia, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Compton: On this the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, my country shares the sense of achievement of Member States of the United Nations that our efforts have rewarded the hopes of the founding fathers that the Organization should save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It was also the express wish that the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small should be respected and protected.

In many ways, the Member States of the United Nations have embraced the four freedoms of the Atlantic Charter and tried to elevate them to universal truths. I refer to freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship or conscience, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

We have struggled over the past half-century to attain these ideals, but in our human imperfections we have fallen short of full glory. Somehow, Nirvana has eluded us. We have to admit that the idealism of the 1940s seems to have lapsed into the materialism of the 1990s. The underlying sense of equity and justice which informed the original Charter is somewhat overshadowed by events in the global village today. In the theatre of war, that sense of exhilaration and deeper humanity which came in the wake of the horrors of Belsen and Auschwitz seems to have slipped back into the double focus of the atrocities of Bosnia and the genocide of Rwanda.

At the level of trade and development we have seen a systematic reduction in foreign aid and aggressive competition, and even those institutions such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the International Development Agency, which were created specifically to help the wretched of the Earth, are either starved of support or threatened with extinction. The dream has dimmed, but not completely faded. We must all redouble our efforts to ensure that the Charter's vibrant call for equal rights, with its comforting implication of racial harmony, is not mocked by the xenophobia which threatens Western society today.

However, in spite of these developments, which seem to have violated the idealism of the founding fathers, the Organization has much cause for celebration. Its many organs and agencies, which work quietly and efficiently away from the glare of the media, have many achievements to their credit. They are engaged in silent battles against man's ancient enemies of ignorance, poverty and disease. They have kept the peace in many parts of the world without the fanfare of international commendation. They have registered remarkable successes in freeing subject-peoples from the yoke of colonial domination.

In recent weeks we have seen the other half of humanity, some would say the better half, the women of the world, emerge from the shadows of neglect seeking to shed the effects of centuries of discrimination. They took to the world stage, seriously and purposefully, at the United Nations-sponsored Conference at Beijing. Their powerful voices demanded to be recognized as what creation intended them to be, the helpmates and equal partners of men. Such triumphs demand not only observation on our fiftieth anniversary, but celebration as well.

I should like to congratulate the President and his country for his elevation to the presidency of this time-honoured body. May I further express my country's empathy with the programmes and policies espoused by our Secretary-General Mr. Boutros-Ghali. But most of all, let me pay tribute to all the Member countries of the United Nations which have fought so valiantly in the past 50 years to preserve the spirit of San Francisco.

We have scored many remarkable victories in South Africa, in Haiti and more tentatively, in the Middle East. We must now face squarely the convoluted problems of Africa. We must support the brave initiative of Latin America and the Caribbean to forge an impressive Association of Caribbean States. These exciting initiatives undertaken by the countries of the Caribbean Basin cut clear across the barriers of race, language and culture. They embrace vast countries as well as small islands, and it is our fervent hope that this Association will be the microcosm of the United Nations in search of peace, justice and equality.

The lofty ideals which brought us together must be recaptured. We must avoid the debilitating and demoralizing effects of materialism and make an effort to recapture the spirit of San Francisco.

Looking back, we are reminded of the haunting words of the poem *Desiderata*, which says:

> "With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams
> It is still a beautiful world."

Let us all strive to make it even more beautiful in the twenty-first century.

The Acting President: I thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development of Saint Lucia for his statement.

His Excellency the Right Honourable John G. M. Compton, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development of Saint Lucia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mario Frick, Prime Minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Mario Frick, Prime Minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

His Excellency Mr. Mario Frick, Prime Minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Frick: This commemorative meeting is a very solemn event, doing justice to the impressive history of the United Nations and to its unique role in today's world, and I am honoured to add Liechtenstein's voice to the celebrations. In view of the limited time at our disposal, we have to focus on those issues which appear to be of particular importance, but I attach great importance to emphasizing that other topics, which I will not be able to mention today, deserve the same attention and our most careful consideration.

Liechtenstein joined the United Nations only five years ago, but we had long benefited from the Organization's achievements. The United Nations has defined international human-rights standards and has laid the foundation for the international promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations system has strengthened and expanded international law, and it has promoted the recognition of the human rights of women as well as the active participation of women in all sectors of society.

Today we are looking back at 50 years of the existence of the United Nations, which are rich in events, turning-points and changes. Above all, however, it is our duty to look forward and, drawing from the experience we have acquired in half a century, to strengthen the capacities and the effectiveness of the United Nations, which today, more than ever, is faced with numerous, enormous tasks.

New problems and new challenges call for new, creative and flexible approaches. No one can deny that the United Nations today is not always able to respond swiftly and effectively to sometimes rapidly changing situations or, as would be most desirable, to become active in a preventive manner.

A comprehensive reform and restructuring of the United Nations system is necessary to achieve this goal and we are therefore pleased that all Member States have agreed to make serious and coordinated efforts in this respect. The reform of the Security Council, the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development constitute crucial elements in this process. But we have to realize that no reform, however artful it may be, can be successful unless we are able to finally provide the Organization with a sound financial base. We are, in this context, especially concerned about the endangering of peace-keeping operations. It is unacceptable that the United Nations, while at the centre of the attention and expectations of people, should find itself continuously grappling with serious financial problems. Various measures can be useful in working towards this goal, and several promising proposals have been made in this respect including the improved use of available resources. The most important requirement, however, remains that we all pay fully and on time the contributions which we are obliged to pay under the Charter of the United Nations.

In recent years, United Nations activities have been marked by radical changes on the global political map, a considerable increase in the membership of the Organization and the holding of several major conferences in different fields. Those conferences have made very clear the extent to which the major issues of concern to the United Nations are interdependent, and we agree with those who believe that we should now focus

our efforts on the implementation of the respective outcomes of those conferences.

While the future structure and work of the United Nations will have to be shaped and elaborated through the careful efforts and negotiations of our delegations, we can, at this Commemorative Meeting, send a strong message by making very clear that we remain genuinely committed to the purposes and principles of this Organization and that we are willing to do everything possible to achieve those purposes. Whatever changes and challenges the future may bring, the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations will always depend on the political will of its Members, and subsequent credibility in the eyes of the peoples that we represent.

The Acting President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Mario Frick, Prime Minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Chrétien (*interpretation from French*): For 50 years now the United Nations has symbolized Canada's best hopes for a world at peace. I believe there is a simple reason for this commitment. The United Nations stands for the rule of law, for social and political justice and for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

These are important principles for Canadians. They are at the heart of our identity. For although Canadians sometimes forget it, the highest hope of the global community is to achieve what we in Canada have achieved for ourselves: a means of living together in peace and understanding. While we do not have an answer to every problem, we do have the means to pursue these answers together — with respect, tolerance, accommodation and compromise.

(*spoke in English*)

Through 50 years the United Nations has struggled against racism and colonialism, against disease and illiteracy. It has stood up for those who have no voice — the oppressed, and millions of women and children around the world. It has contained many conflicts and brought relief to their victims. But the work is far from finished. Peace remains elusive for millions around the world. The rights of nations and the rights of individuals under international law must still be defended. The gap between rich and poor countries is far too wide. The right balance between economic development and a healthy environment must be established.

We have so much to do. But now the United Nations itself is under attack. We see it in the financial crisis. Too many States do not pay their dues on time and in full. But finances are only a symptom of a deeper crisis, a growing belief that nations cannot work together effectively on issues of common concern.

Some argue that global approaches are too complex. Others say that the United Nations is too expensive, and not worth the cost. These arguments betray a lack of confidence in the future, and Canada will have none of it.

The President returned to the Chair.

Today, even more than 50 years ago, it is truly one world. More than ever we need the United Nations. We need it to maintain international stability and order. We need it to tackle problems that do not respect borders — AIDS, drugs, terrorism. We can make the United Nations better. Countries which can pay their dues should, now. We can reform the scale of assessments to reflect current economic realities and should without delay.

(*spoke in French*)

The Security Council can be more representative and can improve its transparency, its consultations and its mandates for peace-keeping. Improvements are under way. Let us finish the job.

We can react more quickly to crises. Canada has submitted a study on ways to improve the rapid deployment of military and civilian United Nations personnel. We are encouraged that the United Nations is studying these proposals seriously. We can review the mandates of the specialized agencies and make sure that they are dealing with the right issues in the right way.

The Secretary-General is working to cut waste and find efficiencies throughout the United Nations. We are each doing this in our own countries. We should do no less for the United Nations.

Fifty years ago, in the ashes of a world war, in the shadow of 50 million dead, our predecessors found the strength to believe in a better future, and the courage and the determination to build one. The result was the establishment of the United Nations. Surely we, the leaders of 1995, should do no less.

(*spoke in English*)

I pledge to the Assembly that Canada is committed to that task. Canadians believe in the future. Without that deep, unyielding belief we would not have built the country that the United Nations has named the best country in the world in which to live. That unshakeable belief is what we brought to the first 50 years of the United Nations. It is what we commit to the next 50 years.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of Canada for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

His Excellency Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Velayati (*spoke in Persian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): The United Nations signifies the culmination of the perennial aspirations of humanity to eschew war and conflict and to foster development, mutual respect, peace, understanding and cooperation between all peoples of the world. It was born in the aftermath of two of the most devastating wars in all human history, emanating from Europe and engulfing the globe. From the ashes of war rose a new structure that assumed the responsibility of ensuring peace and security in the world. Principles drawn up in the Charter of the United Nations became the cornerstone of international law for the resolution of disputes and the promotion of peaceful solutions to conflicts.

In retrospect, the wisdom of the underlying principles of the United Nations is vividly clear. Indeed, what has united us in this world body is our collective embrace of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, so eloquently enshrined in the Charter. Adherence to and respect for these principles will thus undoubtedly strengthen the Organization and enhance its role, while any attempt to evade the responsibilities that we have all undertaken under this covenant, however appealing and convenient it might appear in the short term to do so, will sow the seeds of its gradual disintegration.

The United Nations gains its uniqueness and strength from its universal character, which is even more impressive in the light of the diversity of its constituent elements and which can be maintained and enhanced only through respect for such diversity. In the prudent letter and spirit of the Charter, faith in and, thus, protection of, fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person, and equal rights of men and women cannot be divorced from respect for equality of nations, large and small.

There can therefore be no justification for any attempt to impose the will or values of a few over the rest of humanity or to enhance the perception of security of the privileged few at the expense of subjecting the rest of humanity to the nightmare of nuclear holocaust. Many of the ills of the international community stem from the diversion of precious resources from development to the arms race. Adding to an already complex problem are unilateral economic measures, ranging from protectionist policies and various forms of conditionalities to outright coercive economic measures and the United States policy of economic terrorism against independent States, as well as attempts to push aside the development agenda of the United Nations.

The efforts of the United Nations system in the area of cooperation for development, particularly those carried out by specialized agencies and programmes, have made their primary contribution by introducing ordinary people in the remotest parts of the world to the name, if not the ideals, of the United Nations. The development agenda of the United Nations should not be overshadowed by other,

more glamorous subjects or undermined in the course of reform.

Indeed, the needs and aspirations of those very same people, who constitute the majority of humanity, must be the focus and foundation of any effort to revitalize, restructure and reform the Organization, whose conceptual objectives should be to render the United Nations decision-making process transparent, democratic, rule based and inclusive. This is in total contrast with the self-arrogated position of leadership of the United States, which insists on misusing its position within the Organization and, even at the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, reserves for itself the resort to unilateral measures against the will of the United Nations.

The key to ensuring the success, continued relevance, and moral authority and legitimacy of the United Nations in the next millennium is the reinvigoration of the underlying concept of sovereign equality and its full application in all aspects of the work of the Organization. It implies, first and foremost, enhancing the role of the General Assembly as the most democratic and representative organ of the United Nations, removing institutionalized and implicit centres of privilege and influence and respecting the values of the equal constituent elements of this unique universal mosaic.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Bahige Tabbarah, Minister of Justice of Lebanon

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Bahige Tabbarah, Minister of Justice of Lebanon.

His Excellency Mr. Bahige Tabbarah, Minister of Justice of Lebanon, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Tabbarah (*interpretation from Arabic*): Lebanon has been committed to the principles of the United Nations and to the realization of its objectives since 1945, the year in which we signed the Charter. Lebanon believes that inter-State relations must be based on mutual respect and equality of rights. It also believes in peoples' right to self-determination.

Lebanon participated in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. It strongly supported efforts to eradicate colonialism. To the world, Lebanon has given an example of tolerance and coexistence between different religions and creeds. Lebanon's belief in the principles and values on which the United Nations system was founded and its conviction that this Organization is the last resort for the weak and the oppressed have prompted us to bring to the attention of the United Nations our concerns, in the hope that our rights may be recognized and our problems may be resolved in the framework of law and international legality.

In resolution 425 (1978) the Security Council called for Israel's immediate withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories. It also called for the need to extend the authority of the State all the way to the internationally recognized Lebanese boundaries. Today, 17 years after the deployment of the international forces in the south, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is still unable to carry out its mandate because of the stance of Israel which still refuses to withdraw, insists on maintaining an occupation zone in the southern part of Lebanon, continues to usurp land and detain the innocent and pursues a policy of pressure and intimidation.

We participated in the peace process in Madrid in good faith, on the basis of the Security Council resolutions. We are still determined, despite all the setbacks, that this peace we are striving for should be just and comprehensive; that it should guarantee the rights of all peoples in the region and ensure the return of the Palestinians to their homes. We have learned from history that peace which is not based on justice is bound to be temporary. We want a lasting peace for our region and for future generations.

We are truly disappointed as we put on record the inability of the United Nations to implement its resolutions with regard to Israel, while many other resolutions are implemented. With bitterness we realize that different standards are used in dealing with Member States of the Organization.

However, such disappointment and bitterness can only strengthen our belief in the principles upon which this Organization was founded. They must constitute a serious impetus that should prompt us all to provide the

United Nations with the necessary support to strengthen it and make it capable of implementing the resolutions it adopts.

Proceeding from this and despite our suffering as a result of our long ordeal, despite the heavy demands of reconstruction against a backdrop of economic and social hardship, Lebanon has paid its assessed contributions to the United Nations in full. We take this opportunity of the golden anniversary of the United Nations to call upon Member States of the United Nations, and in particular the major Powers, to pay their arrears as a first step towards strengthening this Organization and reactivating it. This shall enable the United Nations to carry out its mission and achieve the consolidation of peace in various troubled regions in the world.

We do support the work of the Secretariat in the field of peacemaking and peace-keeping and consider such work to be not only one of the priorities of the Organization, but a core priority indeed.

However, we consider that the United Nations is not only a unique forum where Members can have their voices heard and their complaints addressed. It is primarily the international institution that provides assistance and support to the developing countries so that they, in turn, can build their economies and their societies, and gradually bridge the gap between the industrial and the developing countries.

World peace and understanding and respect for human rights cannot be permanent unless the economic gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world is bridged.

We realize that the challenges in that respect are great. However, we are confident that the international community can muster the necessary will-power to meet them. This can only be done by reactivating the role of this Organization as a haven for world peace and social justice.

The President: I thank the Minister of Justice of Lebanon for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Bahige Tabbarah, Minister of Justice of Lebanon, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Alexander Chikvaidze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Alexander Chikvaidze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

His Excellency Mr. Alexander Chikvaidze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Chikvaidze: I should like to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, selected by your peers to preside over this historic session, thus acknowledging your outstanding personal and professional contribution to the international community.

Allow me also to address words of deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his remarkable dedication to guiding the Parliament of Man through some of its most trying times, and mapping out a more secure, peaceful and coherent world for future generations in his Agenda for Peace.

I am pleased and honoured to convey to this unique gathering the greetings of the Head of State of Georgia, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, as well as the gratitude of the people of Georgia to all Member States for their support of my country in one of the most dramatic moments of its long history.

Mr. Shevardnadze was strongly inclined to participate in this Commemorative Meeting, which is unique in its importance and magnitude. The charged atmosphere of parliamentary and presidential elections, however, did not allow him to leave the country and deliver his tenth statement from this rostrum. He asked me to assure the Assembly that Georgia is steadily returning to normal life. A new Constitution has been adopted, a new national currency has been introduced, and, as I just mentioned, presidential and parliamentary elections will be held on 5 November 1995. The Georgian leadership is invariably dedicated to its objectives of a successful transition to democracy, a market economy, social stability, peace at home and friendly relations abroad.

Anniversaries are a time to celebrate, but also a time to reflect. My Government strongly believes, however, that this reflection should not border on pessimism and an across-the-board negation of all the achievements of the past half-century.

If the United Nations did not exist, we would need to invent it. Now that it exists, we need to reinvent it. The United Nations is the largest and most powerful tool that can be wielded by the collective will of its Member States; yet it can only be wielded effectively if we, the Member States ourselves, are in step with the changes that have occurred in the world in the past few years.

The founding fathers of the United Nations half a century ago realized full well what kind of international landscape they had inherited after the Second World War, and built this Organization to respond to it.

Having experienced what probably amounts to the most momentous change of the twentieth century — the disappearance of the hostile confrontation of two different social systems — the political leaders of today have not undertaken anything of the sort.

It was obvious that the United Nations was the best instrument for restoring to the world a new equilibrium in place of the precarious balance of the bipolar world. For various reasons, however, the new world order which might have been is being killed in its infancy. It is being killed in the former Yugoslavia; it is being killed in Nagorno Karabakh, in Abkhazia and in South Ossetia.

In the absence of a clear strategy and fresh philosophical directions, the Organization, like any large bureaucracy, is slow to change and, similar to many other institutions of the post-war era, is struggling to find a new identity.

We believe that the new philosophy of the United Nations must give priority to the strategy of "making" peace over "keeping" peace. The United Nations is obliged to break with neutrality in favour of a mandatory implementation of the principles of the Charter with regard to those who break the peace.

There is also a need for a new method of decision-making — one that would focus on the means of implementation, rather than be excessively preoccupied with procedure and self-serving adjustable wording. We must have the courage and the will to call an aggressor an aggressor, and genocide genocide.

Precedents by which illegitimate extremist groups who have violated the United Nations Charter are invited into the negotiating process to participate as "parties" and are requested to consent to specific measures accord them the legitimacy of a "subject of international law" that they seek and devalue membership of the Organization itself.

The biggest danger, however, lies in the message that these precedents imply — that the force of arms can take precedence over the power of law. Georgia firmly believes that the global security architecture of today must encompass relations not only between but also within States. Georgia's example clearly demonstrates that the territorial integrity of a State is made up of the integrity of the lives and rights of its citizens.

Without individual rights, there are no rights of peoples or of humankind. Without individual rights, there is neither stability of States nor global order. It would be a tragedy of monumental proportions, and a lost opportunity for which succeeding generations would never forgive us, if we did not finally take advantage of the unique opening provided by history to build a secure foundation for a more stable and predictable world. This cannot be achieved by advancing security systems towards the East or the West; it can be achieved only by advancing towards securing the major achievement of this century — the elimination of global confrontation.

This will create a situation in which the United Nations is able to demonstrate the full measure of its effectiveness and, conversely, will prove to be the most appropriate and powerful tool of the international community in achieving this goal and in managing the numerous challenges that the twenty-first century holds in store.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Alexander Chikvaidze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Honourable Danny Philip, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Solomon Islands

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency The Honourable Danny Philip, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Solomon Islands.

His Excellency The Honourable Danny Philip, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign

Affairs of Solomon Islands, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Philip: This rostrum is a symbol of the reason why we are gathered here to celebrate the last 50 years, and the challenge to move into the future without fear. Among the 50 countries that sent delegations to San Francisco in April 1945 to adopt the Charter of the United Nations were three from the Pacific region: Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. In the plenary meetings that opened the United Nations Conference on International Organization the heads of delegations spoke of their hopes for the United Nations and outlined the positions of their Governments on the draft Charter.

General Carlos Romulo of the Philippines said:

> "We are here to fight for our lives. We are well aware that international understanding must rest on practical security and that the economic structure of the world must determine the balance between nations, but of more lasting importance is the spiritual structure .... Our aim must be tolerance, for victory can be preserved only with tolerance."

The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Peter Fraser, said:

> "The maintenance of peace is the paramount problem that confronts us. This is a moral problem and not merely a mechanical one to be solved by procedures, however carefully devised and comprehensive their nature. ... I would plead most earnestly that the members of the new Organization should seek international equity, both political and economic."

And on the same occasion Australia's Deputy Prime Minister, Francis Forde, said:

> "We take the view that peace and security must rest on economic justice and social security. ... We cannot disentangle in our minds the idea of justice from that of peace."

Half a century after representatives of our sister States in the Pacific gave voice to these ideas in San Francisco, they are as fresh as if spoken today, and more relevant than ever. Building international peace and security based upon political and economic equity, fostering universal human rights supportive of cultural diversity and integrity, protecting the environment and maintaining sustainable development — these are the ways in which we continue to fight for our lives through the United Nations. As the founders of this Organization understood, our problems are ultimately moral and spiritual in nature. Therefore, the very work of diplomacy can be successful only in an atmosphere of tolerance.

His Holiness Pope John Paul II recently said in this Hall:

> "there is a moral logic which is built into human life and which makes possible dialogue between individuals and peoples. *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 3)*

> "The United Nations needs to rise more and more above the cold status of an administrative institution and become a moral centre where all the nations of the world feel at home and develop a shared awareness of being, as it were, a family of nations. ... The family is by nature a community based on mutual trust, mutual support and sincere respect." *(ibid., p. 5)*

In the course of the last five decades this Organization did much to expand and strengthen the community of nations. In the Pacific, for example, the United Nations has been a critical factor in the emergence of independent States. The recent international recognition of the vulnerability of small island developing States to adverse economic conditions, as well as to natural and environmental disasters, is for us a significant example of the family of nations building mutual trust, support and respect.

In this spirit of community, the Solomon Islands proposes that, to assist the movement towards a universal United Nations, the fiftieth session of the General Assembly consider and adopt a plan to bring into the Organization the several nations that have expressed their desire to become Member States but are as yet financially or politically unable to do so.

Among the ends for which "We the peoples" of the world established the United Nations, as stated in the Charter, is

> "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

The Solomon Islands — an ethnically and linguistically diverse, developing nation — believes that it is time to formulate an agenda for democracy and tolerance to

complement "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development". Based upon the experience of the United Nations system in assisting nations to nurture democratic institutions and tolerance, this new agenda will offer humankind the goal of the spiritual security that is the essence of the objectives we seek in the Agendas for peace and development.

Spiritual security is essential if the purposes of the United Nations, stated in Article 1 of the Charter, are to be realized. Spiritual security is critical if the United Nations is to be, in the words of the Charter,

"a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations"

in attaining peace, international cooperation and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The proposed agenda for democracy and tolerance will be the vital link in the triad of Agendas, which will buttress the new diplomacy that is emerging. People-centred, the new diplomacy embraces the ideals of democracy, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, the rights of persons and peoples, equity and sustainable development.

On 14 February 1919, President Woodrow Wilson told the Paris Peace Conference that, throughout the Covenant of the League of Nations:

> "We are depending primarily and chiefly upon one great force, and that is the moral force of the public opinion of the world — the cleansing and clarifying and compelling influences of publicity."

The League of Nations failed to maintain peace and security, but the moral force of public opinion, now quickly formed by nearly instant communications, is potentially enormous. We have experienced this at the United Nations. How to keep the new diplomacy — people-centred development — responsive to the moral force of public opinion is one of the greatest challenges facing all the nations and the peoples of the world in the centuries to come. Let us all hope and, with optimism for the future, instil greater positivity in the work of the United Nations for greater achievement, as together we make a quantum leap into the twenty-first century.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Solomon Islands for his statement.

His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Danny Philip, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Solomon Islands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Jacques F. Poos, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jacques Poos, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg.

His Excellency Mr. Jacques F. Poos, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Poos (*interpretation from French*): We are gathered today to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization. In 1945, 51 countries, emerging from the most devastating war that humanity had ever known, met at San Francisco to make a commitment to build together a just and lasting peace.

Determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, the international community wanted to create an organization that could prevent similar horrors in the future by establishing the political, economic and social conditions of a new, more peaceful and safer world.

The great hopes placed in the United Nations were soon tempered by the cold war, which divided the world into two antagonistic military and ideological blocs. In spite of the ensuing paralysis, our Organization was able to ensure relative stability by preventing the outbreak of a major conflagration and by limiting the scope and intensity of existing conflicts. It was able to lay down the principal guidelines that allowed it peacefully to settle difficult problems and, in many cases, to substitute dialogue and negotiation for armed hostility.

Above and beyond the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations created conditions propitious to considerable progress in many other sectors. Through its activities, the United Nations improved the living conditions of and offered sanctuary to hundreds of millions of the disinherited and homeless. It helped to eradicate infectious diseases and to reduce infant mortality throughout the world. It is no coincidence that the first important text adopted by our Organization after the San Francisco Conference was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The end of the cold war ushered in a new era in which the search for lasting peace again seemed possible. Yet, only a few years after this remarkable manifestation of hope, we are again plagued by doubt and uncertainty as to the ability of the international community to put an end to ever-increasing conflicts. In Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, we see internal conflicts that are tearing States apart and complex crises in which political, military and humanitarian elements are inextricably linked.

Moreover, threats of war of a very different kind have emerged, confronting our Organization with new challenges. These threats include international terrorism, the proliferation of arms, drug trafficking and environmental degradation. The search for responses to these threats can only be undertaken at the global level. The United Nations alone has the authority and legitimacy to attempt to meet these challenges.

Let us not make the United Nations a scapegoat for our own failings. It is not the United Nations that has disappointed our hopes but we, the Member States, which have not lived up to the ideals of our Organization and deny it the political and financial means to fulfil the mandate we have entrusted to it.

If we wish to prepare our Organization for the next 50 years of its existence, we must reform it so as to allow it to respond more effectively to the old challenges and the new ones which we are facing. We must find an immediate solution to the financial crisis, guarantee the balanced expansion of the Security Council, develop preventive diplomacy and improve the organization of peace-keeping operations. In the economic and social field, we must strengthen our capacity to promote sustainable development by merging organs and functions and creating an economic security council. These are the principal reforms we must institute.

The aspirations of the founding fathers of the United Nations are as valid today as they were 50 years ago. The Organization they handed down to us is a reflection of our world, with all its imperfections and hopes. We must show ourselves to be worthy of the enthusiasm which the Organization continues to inspire in the peoples of the world. Luxembourg will continue resolutely to support the cause of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Jacques F. Poos, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Galo Leoro, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Galo Leoro, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador.

His Excellency Mr. Galo Leoro, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Leoro (*interpretation from Spanish*): On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, Ecuador wishes to stress the fact that, in accordance with the lofty goals set out in the Charter, the world Organization has achieved important successes, among which is the avoidance of a third world war that would have entailed a nuclear holocaust for all humanity. On the other hand, there have been major failures in many areas, as witnessed by the persistence of serious problems, chiefly due to the absence of a real desire for international cooperation.

Many distinct conflicts have led to a significant loss of human life, unspeakable suffering, hunger and misery. Some of these have been resolved through United Nations action, while others have been settled through a variety of mechanisms outside our Organization. Serious problems persist, wreaking havoc at all levels.

The concept of peace and security which, in 1945, was understood mainly in the context of traditional military concerns in the framework of collective security, has been appropriately expanded to embrace the political, economic and social conditions in which peoples live. State sovereignty is in the process of evolving, as is the very institution of the State. The promotion of democracy and the defence and protection of human rights have become universal norms.

Notwithstanding the failures and political and social changes of recent years, the purposes and principles of the United Nations have survived intact, including the maintenance of international peace and security, the avoidance of resort to the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and the obligation to settle international disputes by exclusively peaceful means, which entails the non-recognition of territories acquired by force. The

Organization must also continue to strive to create the conditions of stability and well-being necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations, as well as the promotion of conditions conducive to progress and economic and social development for all.

To attend to the new and increasing demands being placed upon it by the international community, our Organization needs major structural change, adopted in keeping with the obligations derived from its supreme instrument, the Charter of San Francisco. Respect for the binding nature of this fundamental universal instrument is the only way to guarantee the survival of small and weak countries. Ecuador continues to be a firm supporter of the rule of law on the basis of the immutable principles of justice. Thus do we reaffirm our commitment to pursuing the ongoing quest for just and equitable solutions, arising from agreements mutually arrived at, to the conflicts that persist in the world, and particularly in our region.

We therefore applaud your statement, Mr. President, in welcoming His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the General Assembly, when you said:

> "that for the ideals of peace and fraternity to take root deeply among men they must be based on economic, social and cultural development as well as on the primacy of justice." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 1)*

Ecuador likewise embraces with enthusiasm the challenge of the Pontiff to overcome our fear of the future and to do so together through

> "the common effort to build a civilization of love, founded on the universal values of peace, solidarity, justice and liberty." *(ibid., p. 6)*

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Galo Leoro Franco, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Kozo Zoumanigui, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea

The President: The assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Kozo Zoumanigui, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea.

His Excellency Mr. Kozo Zoumanigui, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Zoumanigui *(interpretation from French)*: Allow me to transmit to the General Assembly the heartfelt greetings of the people, the Government and General Lansana Conté, President of the Republic of Guinea, from whom I have the honour and the privilege to convey this message of solidarity:

> "Leaders of the world, I should like at the very outset to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, for the invitation he so kindly addressed to us. We also express our thanks to all those who have organized this anniversary celebration, which is such a resounding success.
>
> "Having discharged this duty, I should like to state that it is a genuine pleasure for me, on behalf of the Government of Guinea and on my own personal behalf, on this happy occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, to be able from this lofty rostrum to deliver to you not only a message of peace, friendship and the solidarity of the people of Guinea towards the peoples of the entire world, but, indeed, also one of hope, confidence and unbreakable faith in the United Nations and in the purposes and principles embodied in its Charter.
>
> "I take pleasure, finally, in paying a warm tribute to the achievement of the founding fathers, and to the singular distinction with which His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations is managing affairs at the global level.
>
> "In attempting to take stock of the 50 years of our Organization's existence, I think it can be said that over this last half-century the United Nations has proved irreplaceable, unique as a tool for dialogue, a concerted approach, negotiation and international cooperation. Through all these years, it has provided the ideal framework and laboured tirelessly not only for the maintenance of international peace and security, but also to mobilize the international community towards a solution of the problems of the world's economic and social development.
>
> "The international political scene has over the last several years witnessed unprecedented change.

One of the consequences of this profound development has been the emergence of new challenges, whose diversity and complexity are matched only by their urgency. Suddenly, the responsibilities of the United Nations have grown considerably, its tasks multiplied, as it initiates, develops and consolidates new strategies designed to enhance the well-being of us all while ensuring a better future for generations to come.

"While our Organization has, certain setbacks notwithstanding, distinguished itself in its principle realm of competence, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security, its talent and capacity for responding promptly and effectively to the many demands placed upon it from around the world are still being sorely put to the test by the multiplicity of conflicts and other hotbeds of tension and, in particular, because of the weight of the burden of peace-keeping operations.

"Therefore, to be able to continue effectively and fully to play its role, the United Nations needs to be reinforced and to be given resources commensurate with the expectations of mankind. Against that background, the issuance of "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" is particularly apposite at the end of this century. The international community is duty bound resolutely and steadfastly to support those documents.

"The direct nexus between peace and security on the one hand, and economic and social development on the other needs no further proof. After all, what do we observe today, if not that our world is chiefly characterized by inequalities, flagrant disparities and imbalances in the way wealth and resources are allocated?

"To cope with all this, mankind needs a new vision of its future, one which rests on the central idea of the role to be played by the United Nations in meeting the economic and social challenges we are facing.

"Peoples of the world, over the last five decades we have together thwarted the most diabolical designs and conquered the most abject kinds of discrimination. Together we must overcome, through our Organization, all the forms of exclusion — all are inadmissible — that afflict groups of men and women, of countries, indeed, of entire regions of the world.

"The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations which we are commemorating today quite rightly affords us the opportunity to stop and reflect together on the new role to be given to this Organization. Let this anniversary give mankind the chance to bestow upon itself a still stronger institution, driven by a spirit of solidarity, of fruitful cooperation, capable of mobilizing the means and the resources necessary to meet the challenges before us — challenges such as maintaining international peace and security in the world and achieving economic and social development, justice, democracy and equality.

"Long live the United Nations!"

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Kozo Zoumanigui, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ablassé Ouédraogo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Ablassé Ouédraogo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso.

His Excellency Mr. Ablassé Ouédraogo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Ouédraogo *(interpretation from French)*: The United Nations is 50 years old. But we have only five minutes to speak of these 50 years and of the future. That is the price of success for an Organization that is truly global.

The Charter of the United Nations is hailed and revered; yet the world could be in much better health.

If mankind does not improve, we cannot benefit from institutions, no matter how good they may be.

Ravaged by conflicts, epidemics and natural disasters, our world today is suffering from an even greater evil. That evil is at the root of what is tearing us apart, crucifying us and destroying us.

Openness to others is disregarded. Indifference and self-absorption are today among the greatest dangers facing humanity. The spirit and philosophy of the times demonstrate the tendency to think that, these days, "the others" are the homeless, refugees, street children, immigrants, the poor, rivals, adversaries, enemies, those who are different, foreigners. "The others" have become those that one seeks to avoid.

And yet these last 50 years have witnessed striking and considerable manifestations of solidarity on the part of man towards his fellow man. But these have become eroded or have faded, finally giving rise to a vexing and devastating concept: donor fatigue.

But in a healthy relationship, what is a man if he knows not how to give? What is a man if he knows not how to receive? Does it not call for a review of the situation as soon as possible when it is always the same ones who give and the same ones who receive? Is this not an indication that injustice has become built into the structure of today's world?

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, above and beyond the theory of States and of sovereignty, beyond the relationship of force, beyond the ambitions of domination, should we not substitute people, societies, nations, States? Should we not give new impetus to what was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations in the words "We the peoples", and find again the human being and the humanity in each and every one of us and in each and every one of our acts?

Only then will we progress with certainty towards a world of solidarity, a world of progress, a world of justice and a world of peace.

That is the five-minute message that Burkina Faso wished to convey on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ablassé Ouedraogo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Edgar Camacho Omiste, Chairman of the delegation of Bolivia

The President: I call next on Mr. Edgar Camacho Omiste, Chairman of the delegation of Bolivia.

His Excellency Mr. Edgar Camacho Omiste, Chairman of the delegation of Bolivia, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Camacho Omiste (*interpretation from Spanish*): Special and unforeseen circumstances have prevented the attendance of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Bolivia, Mr. Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, on this occasion. I am charged, therefore, with the very important duty of paying this tribute to the United Nations and of conveying the cordial greetings of the Head of State of Bolivia to Their Excellencies the Heads of State and of Government of the world, to you, Mr. President, and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

For Bolivia, this solemn ceremony symbolizes an act of faith in the capacity of human beings to live together in harmony. It represents a renewal of our commitment to work in the conviction that freedom and equality will prevail on this Earth.

In Bolivia we remember with admiration the ability and vision of those distinguished figures who laid the foundations of the United Nations, and we pay special tribute to our fellow countrymen who attended the historic San Francisco Conference, under the guidance of the then President of our Republic, Colonel Gualberto Villaroel.

The contribution of the Bolivian delegates to that debate was particularly important. Therefore, 50 years later, we reiterate the conviction that lasting peace on Earth requires justice in international relations and within each country.

Our delegates maintained that, if harmony were to prevail among nations, solutions had to be found to situations that impeded fraternal relations among peoples. Justice alone will be the foundation of a true peace.

Some day in the not-too-distant future there will be an end to situations of oppression and dependency, just as colonialism will come to an end, extreme poverty will disappear, friendship among peoples will flourish, and the free and sovereign presence of Bolivia on the Pacific Ocean will become possible.

The power politics of yesterday will have to give way to brotherhood and cooperation as central instruments in the new international relations.

Bolivia encourages friendship among countries and calls for cooperation based on dignity, sovereign equality, respect for diversity, and understanding of the needs and legitimate concerns of peoples.

Good-neighbourly relations require not only sincerity on the part of all, but, most particularly, respect for others and the desire to contribute to the welfare of our brotherly peoples, to raise standards of living, to promote job opportunities and to achieve specific goals in the areas of health, education and housing, while improving access to financing, technology and world markets.

On the basis of these principles, all countries will be active members of the world community, capable of making sustainable development possible, of capitalizing and creating enterprises to respond to the challenges of the day, of eradicating consumption of and trafficking in harmful substances, of releasing humankind from the arms race and the nuclear threat, of consolidating political stability and participatory democracy, of respecting cultural and ethnic diversity, and of creating real conditions for all men and women, the elderly, the youth and children — to live in a better world of true solidarity.

Thus, the agenda of the United Nations for the years to come has been spelt out. The Government of Bolivia, together with the other countries of the Rio Group, the Ibero-American countries and the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, believes that our next duties include convening an international conference against the abuse and illegal trafficking of drugs, the objective of which would be to strengthen the fight against drugs, thus translating the policies of the 1988 Vienna Conference into reality.

We in Bolivia have learned that stagnation corrodes institutions and paralyses ideologies, while change is a wellspring of life and the key to social change. Thus, to protect the worldly and spiritual heritage of nations, we must change attitudes, discover new dimensions of development, modify the international system, and adopt dynamic forms of cooperation, tolerance and universal understanding. We must also strengthen the role of the General Assembly, make the Security Council more effective and representative, confer effective authority on the Economic and Social Council and ensure that law will be the instrument by which international justice is secured.

In Bolivia we are building a multicultural and multilingual country across our Andean highlands and our plains; our country is preparing honourably to fulfil its role in the universal community of the future.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Bolivia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Edgar Camacho Omiste, Chairman of the delegation of Bolivia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call next upon His Excellency Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

His Excellency Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Algabid (*interpretation from French*): Half a century ago, the world, rising from the ruins of two devastating world wars and from the horror and pain they caused, took the measure of outrages that had reached the height of inhumanity. It saw that war, the occupation of the territory of others, aggression and the denial of the national rights of peoples were no longer profitable and could no longer be accepted. Thus, when the United Nations was founded at San Francisco in 1945, the desire was to make diplomacy and negotiation the preferred tools for settling disputes, conflicts and crises.

The imperative need to preserve peace and save succeeding generations from the scourge of war demands adherence to universally recognized principles and a firm determination to defend law and legality wherever they are under threat. Here, the United Nations has done remarkable work. Similarly, inspiring work has been done by the entire United Nations system in the areas of development, culture, health, and social and humanitarian affairs in all regions, including in the Islamic world.

In speaking of these important accomplishments, I want to take the opportunity afforded by this celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations humbly and gratefully to honour the memory of all those, now departed, who so generously laboured to create this

Organization. I address my heartfelt congratulations also to those who continue to serve it with courage and dedication, including, first and foremost, the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali.

Notwithstanding the sustained efforts of the world community, hotbeds of tension and conflict have once again appeared in many places. Some recall in their atrocities the darkest days of human history. Moreover, harsh challenges face the contemporary world: poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, underdevelopment, terrorism in all its forms and in its indiscriminate association with various faiths, the unbridled arms race, and the threats to our environment. All of these challenges demand genuine initiative and an unswerving determination to give concrete form to solidarity and thus to give common interests precedence over individual interests.

Support for the ideal of democracy and the quest for better understanding among peoples can succeed only through greater cultural interaction and productive spiritual relationships marked by a spirit of openness, dialogue and tolerance.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In this connection, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which are so similar in their principles and purposes, has contributed to creating conditions conducive to dialogue and harmony among peoples and nations.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has worked hand-in-hand with the international community in its efforts to ensure that law, justice, moral values and democratic principles prevail. I want to hail the dynamic cooperation, which has grown recently, between the international Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Contact Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The same is true for the Middle East peace process — concerning which the agreements recently signed at Washington have justified hopes for a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Syrian Golan — and for the fratricidal wars in Afghanistan, Somalia and Tajikistan, where the efforts of both organizations in so many spheres continue and grow stronger.

The actions of the international community would gain in breadth if more were done to eliminate the tension created by the conflicts regarding Jammu and Kashmir and Nagorny Karabakh, and by the question of Cyprus.

Finally, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the economic, cultural and humanitarian arenas is beginning to show promising signs. It is with this promise of partnership for peace and for development that I extend best wishes to the United Nations on the threshold of the third millennium for success in the achievement of its noble mission in the service of peace and progress.

The Acting President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Count Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, Member of the Sovereign Council of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call next upon His Excellency Count Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, Member of the Sovereign Council of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

His Excellency Count Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, Member of the Sovereign Council of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Marullo di Condojanni (*interpretation from French*): On the happy occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, I am honoured to extend to the General Assembly the greetings of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and of its Prince and Grand Master Frà Andrew Bertie. Our institution has been a Permanent Observer to the General Assembly for over a year, but has been a part of the international community for centuries. We are, therefore, in a good position to understand, with all the peoples around the world, the importance of today's commemoration, to applaud the progress that has been made and to join in efforts to ensure that the principles of the Charter are brought fully to life.

The inception of the United Nations 50 years ago, heralded the hopes for a new era of peace and well-being around the world. The aim was to leave behind us a war in which the atrocities were on a scale previously unknown to mankind, a war that, with the introduction of nuclear weapons, had convinced peoples and Governments that they had to seek peace at any price.

Today, following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the cold war, hopes for worldwide and lasting peace seem to be slightly closer to realization, and it is a privilege for me to express to the General Assembly the wish of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta to see resolute and effective commitment in the community of nations.

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, which was established about nine centuries ago in Jerusalem, is now based in Rome. It maintains diplomatic relations at the level of Ambassador with 68 Member States of the United Nations, which is more than one-third of its current membership. That alone explains the position of the Order in the international community, whose members recognize it as a *par inter pares*.

Today the flag of the Order flies over specialized hospitals, clinics, first-aid posts and dispensaries that provide assistance throughout the world to children, the aged, the handicapped or those suffering from chronic diseases. These structures provide medical and pharmaceutical attention in places where epidemics are at their height. Quite recently, we agreed to contribute to the Blue Helmets in Lebanon and Kuwait, as we have done in the past in Central America. Furthermore, in 1989 the Order provided assistance to thousand of refugees in East Germany who were travelling to West Germany through Hungary and Austria. The Order was also one of the first to provide humanitarian assistance in the former Yugoslavia.

The Order sees humanitarian assistance as a way to safeguard fundamental human rights and, as such, as an essential tool in helping to guarantee the international peace and security that political, military and diplomatic action needs if it is to be able to establish an international order worthy of man. Inspired by these values, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, thanks to its political neutrality and supranational character, can help to pacify and mediate, at the same time as ensuring respect for dialogue and understanding among peoples.

The values and purposes of our Order fit well with Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, and as a Permanent Observer the Order is fully available to cooperate with the United Nations, particularly in the field of humanitarian assistance. In particular, the Order is ready to make itself available to find ways to provide medical assistance in support of peace-keeping operations.

With these observations in mind, the people of the Order of Malta join all the peoples of the United Nations in today's celebration and in their commitment to cooperate in efforts to improve the efficiency of the implementation of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, allow me to express the hope that the beginning of the second 50 years of the existence of the United Nations will — with the help of the Almighty — usher in the dawn of a new era for future generations. I trust that the United Nations will indeed increasingly be able to live up to the aspirations of the people to peace, well-being, social progress and the solidarity of all peoples.

The Acting President: I thank the Member of the Sovereign Council of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta for his statement.

His Excellency Count Marullo di Condojanni, Member of the Sovereign Council of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. James N. Purcell, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call on Mr. James Purcell, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration.

Mr. James N. Purcell, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Purcell: On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, I am honoured that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) can share in this truly historic event. IOM, the organization I represent, was created as an intergovernmental organization nearly 45 years ago by concerned States that

were convinced that individuals, economies and societies would all benefit from orderly responses to migration. IOM has steadily grown since then and is currently composed of 96 member and observer States. These States, representing all regions of the world, ensure a global character in our approach to today's migration issues.

In responding to global migration needs, IOM not only offers technical assistance to States and facilitates the orderly and planned migration of nationals, but also has a history of reacting quickly in situations that require the timely movement of large numbers of vulnerable persons, such as in the Gulf States in 1992 and more recently in various parts of Africa, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and elsewhere. Since our founding, we have worked in close cooperation with the United Nations system. I am pleased to say that the links between IOM and the United Nations are strong and getting stronger, especially over the course of the past three years since IOM became an Observer of the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

One frequently hears that the world is becoming ever more complex. Certainly, the range of global issues with which the international community is grappling reflects this increasing complexity: human rights, population, poverty, public health, environmental degradation, economic and social development, ethnic conflicts and security issues. Migration sits at the confluence of most of these issues, and in many ways can be viewed as one of the major consequences of the failure to date to deal adequately with their destabilizing aspects.

How the world and the international community respond to migration and migratory pressures is of critical importance to global stability and well-being. Once considered primarily as a positive force in nation-building, migrants are now, more often than not, seen as the visible messengers of society's failures. When migrants move without legal means, as many do, and are stopped, as many are, they severely overburden national systems no longer structured or financed to deal with them humanely and effectively.

A comprehensive framework which views the migration phenomenon in its entirety, beginning with solutions to root causes, is what is required in today's complex world. IOM, with its operational and policy-based migration mandate, can be a key resource in helping to explore comprehensive solutions.

IOM can do this, however, only in close partnership with the United Nations, which has a critical role to play in the resolution of the great issues of our day, including migration.

I would, however, submit that our pursuit of comprehensive solutions will not require a new or more complex international system. Instead, joint efforts on such key issues as migration, which require each member of the extended international family to effectively play its own role in relation to its own mandate, are the only realistic response. Any examination of the role and structure of organizations must provide support for collaborative mechanisms which draw on the strengths of all entities, both inside and outside the United Nations.

IOM is eager to contribute to solving some of these pressing issues, building particularly on our growing association with the United Nations. We see numerous opportunities for strengthening the ties that can and must bind us closer together. I am confident that the good offices of all concerned in putting in train forward-looking approaches will help ensure even greater success for the United Nations in the next 50 years.

The Acting President: I thank the Director-General of the International Organization for Migration for his statement.

Mr. James N. Purcell, Director-General of the International Organization, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call on the next speaker, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Sommaruga (*interpretation from French*): Abounding in symbolism, the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations invites us to ponder history. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is therefore pleased to join in this moment which enables it to reaffirm its faith in mankind by

paying tribute to an institution moulded in its image — imperfect, unique, yet irreplaceable.

Entirely different in terms of their nature and objectives, the United Nations and the ICRC are nevertheless based on the same humanistic philosophy: for the United Nations in 1945 as for the ICRC in 1864 and in 1949, it was a question of vanquishing the demons of war in the aftermath of lethal and devastating conflicts by striving to building a universality of values which unite and unify.

The Charter of the United Nations and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 relative to the protection of victims of war, adopted in the wake of the Second World War, today are the common heritage of humanity. The drafters of these instruments demonstrated great lucidity, aware as they were that it was an illusion to think that war could be banned, so the two actions were completely distinct and have remained so.

In the past 50 years these universal instruments have stood unchallenged. It is remarkable, in fact, to note that the new Member States adhered both to the spirit of Geneva and the spirit of San Francisco, and have even deepened it.

While there exists today a consensus regarding values, making them a reality is still a daily challenge. Since 1945, over 120 conflicts have produced some 22 million victims and continue to inflict untold suffering. The proclaimed dedication to human rights is only equalled by the scorn that these rights are subjected to. In the face of this paradox, the ICRC, whose humanitarian action has grown considerably, would like here above all to be the spokesman of countless victims of armed conflicts, whether they are on the front page or forgotten.

But does not everyone share in the responsibility, the political responsibility of States, the responsibility of institutions, the responsibility of individuals?

Saving human beings in emergencies calls for a rapid humanitarian response, independent of any other type of consideration, if it is to attain its immediate objective, which is to help and protect. Of course, this is a limited, although indispensable, type of response. Evils must be prevented by attacking them at their root. The United Nations has continuously worked in this direction by creating the necessary conditions for the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. Political action remains a key element in the prevention of crises, the responsibility for which rests with States. Similarly, it is States, both individually and collectively through the United Nations, whose task it is to ensure respect for the provisions of international law, *inter alia*, the Geneva Conventions. It seems to me essential that the United Nations achieve progress in the establishment of a permanent international criminal court.

But a culture of tolerance and solidarity, of respect for minorities and of respect, quite simply, for others also depends upon individual attitudes to a large extent. The Red Cross, faithful to its fundamental principles, wishes to make a basic contribution to that end.

More frequent, deadly destabilizing crises confront us with unprecedented challenges. It is urgent to reject the idea that regression is inevitable. Combating intolerance, the need to respect human dignity in all circumstances, compels us to form a common front at all times.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross for his statement.

Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to appeal to representatives to be punctual tomorrow because the President intends to start our work at 10 a.m. sharp.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.